

The Chronology of the Old Testament Prophets

THE sixteen prophets—Isaiah to Malachi—whose writings have come down to us lived during four centuries, from about 800 to 400 B.C. Most of them left chronological data by which the duration of their ministry can be determined, at least approximately. For two of them (Joel and Obadiah), however, no conclusive evidence as to the time of their work exists, and scholars differ widely in their views concerning this matter.

The accompanying chart enables the reader to study these prophets in their historical setting. Many messages and prophecies can be understood correctly only if seen against the background of the time in which the prophets ministered and in the light of the events that happened during their lives.

Inasmuch as it is possible to date the kings of Judah and Israel, especially the later ones, with comparatively high accuracy, the various reigns during which these sixteen prophets ministered have been entered in this chart according to the tentative chronology used in this commentary (see Vol. II, pp. 77, 24, 143, 162, 749, also Vol. IV, pp. 505, 506). The kings of Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia, whose dates for this period are well established, are shown in a separate column. Most of them are mentioned in the Bible, in either the prophetic or the historical books. One column provides a list of certain special events of this period—some of a political nature, concerning the nations surrounding Israel and Judah, others of a domestic nature. This chart shows only those events that are mentioned in the Bible and that are of importance to an understanding of the prophetic messages.

The following brief summaries contain the evidence on which the various prophets have been entered in the chronological positions in which they are found in the chart.

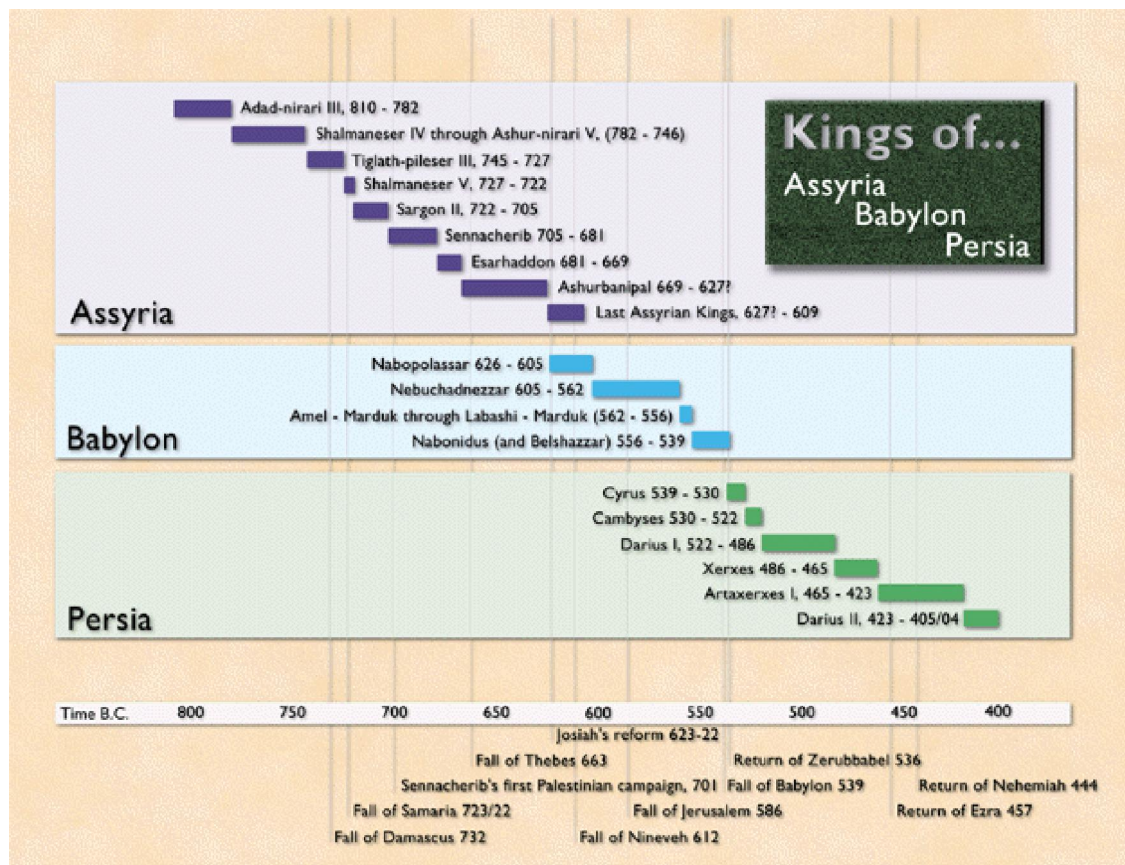
ISAIAH

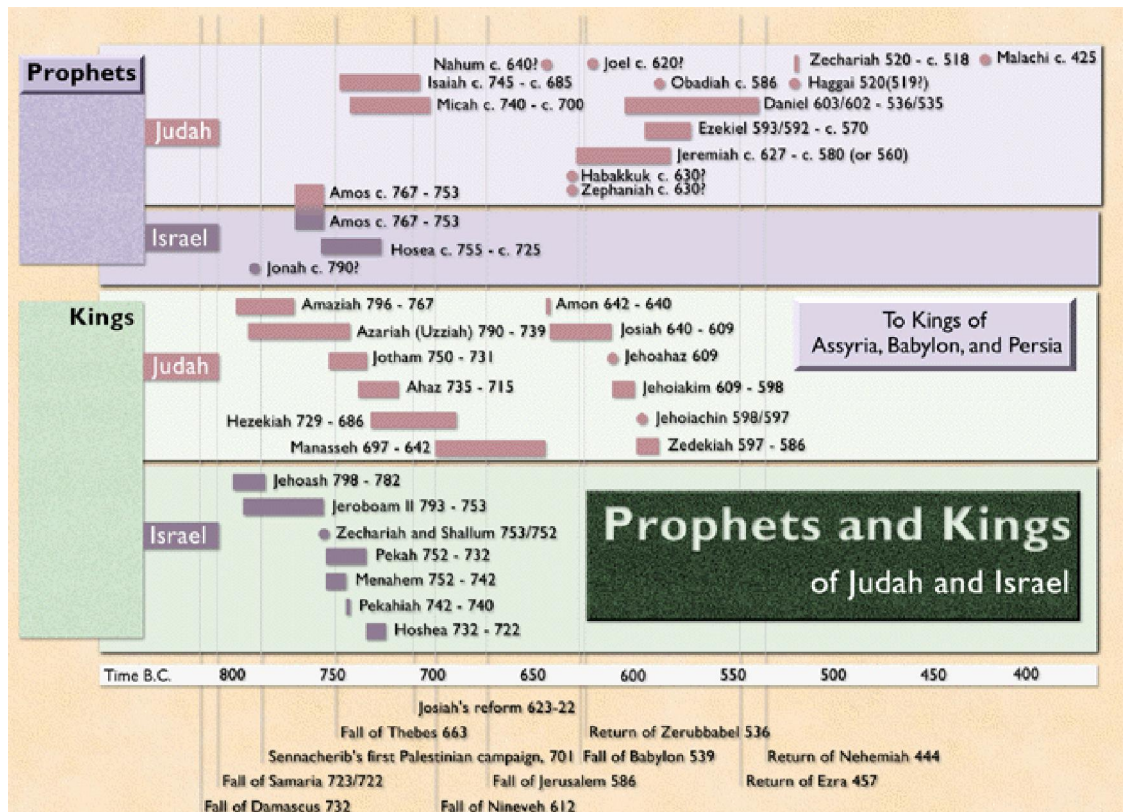
Isaiah was the great forerunner of the writers. This fact is recognized by the various New Testament writers, who quoted Isaiah more than 90 times. Isaiah was a prophet of the southern kingdom, living in a critical period of his nation. He played an important role during two momentous periods: (1) under Ahaz, during the war between Syria and Israel (chs. 7–11), and (2) under Hezekiah, during a siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib (chs. 36; 37). Encouraging Hezekiah and the people through his own trust in God, he was instrumental in saving Jerusalem.

His early ministry seems to have coincided with the last years of King Uzziah's reign (see Introduction to Isaiah), but his official call to the office of a prophet came in 740/39, the last year of King Uzziah (ch. 6:1). Continuing faithfully under the following three kings, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (ch. 1:1), he seems to have been fiercely hated by Manasseh, Hezekiah's wicked son. When Manasseh came to the throne as sole ruler upon his father's death, approximately in 686, he lost little time in removing the faithful seer (PK 382). According to Jewish tradition Isaiah was sawn asunder. It is possible that Heb. 11:37 refers to this event.

¹

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Is 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.





Isaiah's whole ministry from Uzziah to Manasseh must therefore have lasted more than half a century (see PK 310, 382).

JEREMIAH

The life story of Jeremiah is better known than that of any other prophet. He belonged to a family of priests whose home town was Anathoth. Jeremiah had been chosen by God for his office before birth (ch. 1:5), and was called to be a prophet at a tender age (ch. 1:6, 7). Although the Hebrew term *na'ar*, "youth," or "child," by which the prophet designates himself v. (6), does not give an indication of Jeremiah's exact age at the time of his call, the context of the passage in which this word appears seems to favor the interpretation that he was still very young, perhaps less than twenty. This call came to him in the 13th year of King Josiah (ch. 1:2; 25:3), about 627. Josiah was also still a young king, having reached the age of but 21 years at that time.

Living in a crisis period of his nation, Jeremiah was called to proclaim many messages of reproof and solemn predictions of doom over his people for their disobedience. During the reign of Jehoiakim he nearly lost his life for his bold messages, and hence went into hiding (ch. 36:26). During the reign of Zedekiah, Judah's last king, Jeremiah was thrown into prison, being considered a traitor to his country (ch. 37:11-16) because he advised his people to surrender to the Babylonians. After Jerusalem's fall in 586, Nebuchadnezzar allowed Jeremiah to stay with the remnant of his people who were left in the country (ch. 40:1-6). After the murder of Gedaliah, the new governor of Judea, the Jews of Mizpah, fearing the revenge of Nebuchadnezzar, went to Egypt and took with them Jeremiah as well as his secretary Baruch (ch. 43:6).

In Egypt, Jeremiah raised his voice against the idolatries the Jews practiced there (chs. 43; 44). He probably died in the Nile country. A Jewish legend claims that he was stoned to death by his people. If ch. 52, a historical appendix, was written by the prophet, he must have lived until 561, when Jehoiachin was released from prison by King Evil-Merodach of Babylon (see ch. 52:31). In this case, he was an octogenarian. Those who think that ch. 52 was added as an inspired postscript by Jeremiah's secretary or one of his disciples, believe that he died some 20 years earlier, about 580 B.C. The chart allows both ideas, indicating his possible ministry during the two decades preceding 560 B.C. by means of a broken line.

EZEKIEL

The prophet Ezekiel, a priest, was one of the 10,000 Jews taken into exile by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C., when King Jehoiachin was carried to Babylon. In the 5th year of Jehoiachin's captivity, 593/92, Ezekiel had his first vision by "the river Chebar," a canal near the famous city of Nippur in lower Babylonia (ch. 1:1–3). Enigmatic is his statement that this 5th year of captivity was also the "thirtieth year." It is believed that the prophet refers either to his own age or to that year as the 30th year reckoned from the reform which took place during the 18th year of Josiah.

Several of the prophet's messages are dated exactly (see Vol. III, pp. 92, 93), and the last of these dated prophetic messages was received in the 27th year of Ezekiel's captivity (ch. 29:17), 571/70. This leaves Ezekiel with a ministry of at least 22 years, from 593/92 to 571/70. However, it is possible that some of his undated prophecies were given at a later time. Hence the year 571/70 must not be considered as necessarily marking the end of his ministry.

DANIEL

Daniel was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C., during the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar (see on ch. 1:1). But it was not until his 3d year in captivity, the 2d year of Nebuchadnezzar, that young Daniel gave the first proofs of his prophetic calling (chs. 1:5, 17; 2:1, 19). Hence, the year 603 can be considered as the beginning of Daniel's ministry as a prophet.

For some time he held a high position in Nebuchadnezzar's government (ch. 2:48), and became a trusted counselor of the great king. Under Nebuchadnezzar's successors Daniel's service seems not to have been desired. However, he is again found playing a role on the night of Babylon's fall, as interpreter of the mysterious handwriting on the wall (ch. 5). Shortly after this event he once more rose to a high position of honor and responsibility in the newly formed Persian Empire (ch. 6).

All the visions of Daniel recorded in chs. 7–12 were received during the last years of his life, the first one (ch. 7) in Belshazzar's 1st year (552 or possibly later), and the last one (chs. 10–12) in the 3d year of Cyrus, 536/35 B.C. It was probably at this time, when Daniel was nearly 90 years of age, that he was commanded to conclude his book and seal it up (ch. 12:4, 13). For these reasons Daniel's extended prophetic ministry can be dated approximately from 603 to 535 B.C.

HOSEA

The prophet Hosea was a citizen of the northern kingdom of Israel, whose ruler, Jeroboam II, is called by the prophet, "our king" (chs. 1:1; 7:5). A comparison between some of his prophecies and those of Amos indicates that Hosea was a younger contemporary of Amos (cf. Hosea. 4:3 with Amos 8:8; Hosea 4:15 with Amos 5:5; and

Hosea 8:14 with Amos 2:5). Having begun his ministry in the time of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, king of Israel (ch. 1:1), Hosea continued until the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah (ch. 1:1). However, all his messages were addressed to the northern nation.

The book makes no reference to the fall of Samaria, which took place in 723/22 B.C., and it can therefore be concluded that the prophet's last message was given prior to Samaria's destruction. For these reasons his ministry can be dated from about 755 (or earlier) to about 725 B.C.

JOEL

Nothing is known of the prophet Joel beyond the fact that he was the son of Pethuel (ch. 1:1). His work is characterized by skill in the use of language, a well-balanced syntax, and a lively and impressive poetry. Yet the book contains no clear indication of the time in which the prophet lived. It is impossible to date the devastating plague of locusts that the prophet so vividly describes and compares with the terrors of the coming day of judgment. Scholars differ widely in their views concerning the time of Joel's ministry. The older generation place him in the 9th century B.C., whereas most commentators are now inclined to assign him either to the time of King Josiah or to the postexilic period. Since no conclusive evidence for any of these three views exists, all are presented here:

1. *The 9th-century view.*—The great empires of Assyria and Babylonia do not appear within the horizon of the prophet. Hence, he seems to have labored at a time before Assyria played a role in Palestinian affairs. Since the hostile acts of the heathen peoples committed against Judah (ch. 3:4 ff.) seem to refer to those recorded in 2 Kings 8:20–22 and 2 Chron. 21:8–10, 16, while nothing points to the troubles caused by Hazael, as narrated in 2 Kings 12:17, 18 and 2 Chron. 24:23, 24, it has been concluded that Joel gave his messages during the time lying between these two events. It is thought, furthermore, that his ministry fell in the years when the high priest Jehoiada acted as regent for the child king Joash (2 Kings 11:17 to 12:2), which fact would explain why the king is not mentioned anywhere in the book, while at the same time the Temple service flourished.

2. *The 7th-century view.*—This view holds that Joel's ministry seems to fit into the early years of Josiah, when Assyrian power was nearing its end and Babylon was still a weak kingdom. Hence no reference to these two kingdoms was made by the prophet. Since Josiah came to the throne as a child, he must have lived under a regent, which explains why no king is mentioned by Joel. Furthermore, the fact that the people of Tyre and Sidon do not appear as hostile nations of Judah until the last decades of its history, while they are mentioned by Joel as Judah's enemies, seems also to point to a late date for the prophet's ministry. To this can be added the mention of Greeks (ch. 3:6), who hardly played a role in Near Eastern history earlier than the 7th century. For these reasons the 7th-century date for Joel has been adopted in this commentary, although there is no conclusive proof that this choice is correct.

3. *The postexilic view.*—The absence of any reference to a king of Judah or to Assyria or Babylon, the reference to the hostility of Tyre and Sidon, and the mention of Greeks have been taken by some commentators as evidence for a postexilic date for Joel. However, there is also no reference made to Persia, which would be expected if the book was of so late a date. This fact weakens the arguments for such a late date.

AMOS

Amos presents himself to his readers as a “herdman” and a “gatherer of sycomore fruit” (chs. 1:1; 7:14). In the introduction to his book he declares that he worked under the kings Uzziah of Judah and Jeroboam II of Israel. Since only these two kings are mentioned, Amos seems to have prophesied during the time when both kings were sole rulers in their respective kingdoms. Uzziah was sole king over Judah from 767 to 750, and Jeroboam over Israel from 782 to 753. The ministry of Amos may therefore have fallen in the years 767–753 B.C. A closer dating is impossible in spite of the statement that his first divine message came to him “two years before the earthquake” (ch. 1:1), because the date of this event is unknown. However, that earthquake must have been very severe, for the memory of it was still fresh in the minds of people who lived 250 years later, as Zech. 14:5 shows.

The prophet was a citizen of Judah, but delivered messages to the kingdom of Israel as well. Several of his messages were against various foreign nations. He went to Bethel, a sanctuary city of the northern kingdom, to deliver prophecies of warning, reproof, and doom to Israel.

OBADIAH

The short book of Obadiah, consisting of only 21 verses, is not dated and its chronological setting is uncertain. Obadiah’s prophecy, directed against Edom, presupposes that a looting of Jerusalem and a carrying away of many Jews into captivity had recently taken place. Some believe that the prophet refers to the conquest of Jerusalem at the time of King Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20–22; 2 Chron. 21:8–10, 16, 17) in the 9th century; others believe that the prophet is speaking of Jerusalem’s destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. That some of the words he uses are also found in Jeremiah (Obadiah 1, 3, 4; cf. Jer. 49:14, 16), and Joel (Obadiah 15, 17; cf. Joel 1:15; 2:1, 32) can hardly serve as evidence for either a late or an early date. The late date is taken here, without prejudice toward an early one.

JONAH

The prophet Jonah was a Galilean from Gath-hepher. His book contains no direct to establish the time of his mission to Nineveh. However, 2 Kings 14:25 states that Jonah also pronounced a prophecy concerning the expansion of Israel that was fulfilled by Jeroboam II. This prophecy must have been pronounced either before Jeroboam came to the throne (approximately 793 B.C.) or during the early years of his reign. Hence, Jonah was probably the earliest of the prophets under discussion.

So early a date for Jonah’s ministry—about 790 B.C.—fits well into Assyrian history. The only period in which the mission of Jonah to Nineveh, with its results, seems to fit is the reign of Adad-nirari III (810–782). For a short time during his reign Assyria turned from its polytheistic religion to a kind of monotheistic Nabu worship (see Vol. II, p. 60).

MICAH

Micah was a prophet from Moresheth-gath (ch. 1:1, 14), probably *Tell ej-Judeideh* in southwestern Judah. He should not be confused with Micaiah, the son of Imlah, a prophet of Israel in Ahab’s time (9th century B.C.). Earlier commentators attempted to equate the two men, because of the use of similar expressions in their utterances (Micah 1:2; cf. 1 Kings 22:28). However, the chronological data given by Micah are against such an identification and show that a century or more lies between the two men. Micah states

that his ministry fell in the time of the kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (ch. 1:1). Since Jotham's sole reign began after the death of his father Uzziah in 740/39, the initial date for Micah's prophetic ministry should probably be placed after that date. He was therefore a somewhat younger contemporary of Isaiah, to whose vocabulary and terminology his prophecies show great similarity (Micah 4:1–4; cf. Isa. 2:2–4). Also, Jeremiah (ch. 26:18), quoting Micah (ch. 3:12), testifies that Micah ministered during Hezekiah's time. All this leads to the conclusion that Micah prophesied from about 740 to about 700 B.C.

NAHUM

Nahum is called the Elkoshite (ch. 1:1), but Elkosh is unknown as a place name, although commentators have tried to identify it with *Elkesi* in northern Galilee, *Alkush* near Mosul, and a town near Eleutheropolis in Judah. It is certain, however, that he lived and labored in the southern kingdom, and that his main prophecy dealt with Assyria in general and Nineveh in particular. No chronological data are given, but the prophet speaks of the fall of No (ch. 3:8) as an event of the past. This Upper Egyptian capital city, better known by its Greek name Thebes, was destroyed by King Ashurbanipal in 663 B.C., a date that provides the upper time limit of Nahum's prophecy. On the other hand, the destruction of Nineveh is described as an event still future (ch. 3:7). The Assyrian capital city of Nineveh was captured and destroyed by the combined forces of Media and Babylonia in 612 B.C., which is, accordingly, the latest possible date for Nahum. The prophet's vivid description of the catastrophe that had befallen Thebes leaves the impression that the event was still fresh in the memory of the people, whereas Assyria's power, although waning, was not yet near its end. Hence, 640 B.C., about midway between the two limits, marked by the destruction of Thebes and the fall of Nineveh, would seem to be a reasonable conjectural date for Nahum's prophetic ministry.

HABAKKUK

Nothing is known concerning the prophet Habakkuk beyond his name. It is possible that he was a Temple singer, since his third chapter is dedicated to the "chief singer on my stringed instruments" (ch. 3:19). Although no chronological data are found in the book, certain statements permit a comparatively exact dating of Habakkuk's prophecies. The Temple is mentioned as still existing (ch. 2:20), which shows that the book was written before Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Furthermore, the rise of the Chaldeans and their invasion of the West is predicted, but this seemed at that time completely incredible (ch. 1:5–7). This situation fits best the time prior to the rise of the Chaldean Empire under Nabopolassar, who began to reign in 626/25 B.C., and who, with the Medes, was responsible for the destruction of Assyria. A date, possibly about 630 B.C., but before the Chaldeans had become a power of some importance, would seem most appropriate for the period of Habakkuk's prophetic activity.

ZEPHANIAH

The prophet Zephaniah traces his genealogy back to an important personage by the name of Hizkiah, probably King Hezekiah (the names are the same in Hebrew) of Judah. He states that he ministered under King Josiah (ch. 1:1), who reigned from 640 to 609 B.C. Nineveh's destruction, which came in 612, is referred to as a future event, indicating that Zephaniah's work preceded this date. Furthermore, the repeated mention of Judah's wickedness, described as enormous in his day (see chs. 1:4–6, 8, 9, 12; 3:1–3, 7), points to the time before Josiah's reform, which began in 623/22. These observations seem to

place Zephaniah in the early years of Josiah's reign, perhaps about 630 B.C., as a contemporary of Habakkuk.

HAGGAI

Haggai's courageous ministry was responsible for the resumption of the rebuilding of the Temple in the time of Darius I, after the work had ceased for some time (Ezra 4:24; 5:1). The book of Haggai contains four addresses, each bearing a precise date giving the day, month, and year of Darius' reign (on these dates see Vol. III, pp. 98, 99). The consecutive order of the book of Haggai would indicate that his whole recorded ministry lasted not longer than 3½ months, beginning (ch. 1:1) on Aug. 29, 520 B.C., and extending, in his last two recorded speeches (ch. 2:10, 20), to Dec. 18, 520. The work of no other prophet can be dated so definitely as that of Haggai.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah probably belonged to a priestly family (ch. 1:1; cf. Neh. 12:12, 16). His call came to him sometime in October/November, 520 B.C., in the same year as Haggai's first appearance (ch. 1:1; on the dates of Zechariah see Vol. III, pp. 98–100). Several prophecies followed a few months later (Zech 1:7 to 6:15). Then came a pause in his activity of almost two years, at the end of which Zechariah received another divine message, on Dec. 6, 518 (ch. 7:1), recorded in chs. 7 and 8. The remaining messages and prophecies, found in chs. 9–14, are not dated, a fact that prevents us from fixing the duration of the prophet's activity. While it is thus known that he began his work in 520 and continued until 518 B.C., the end of his prophetic ministry must be left open. The close of his ministry is tentatively set by some scholars at 510. It is possible that he worked much longer, as part of chs. 9–14 may have been given at a much later time.

MALACHI

It is not known whether Malachi is the name of the author or simply the title of an otherwise anonymous author, since Malachi means "my messenger." If it is the latter, his is the only anonymous work among the prophetic books of the Old Testament. However, there is no valid reason why Malachi should not be considered a proper name.

Not only is Malachi last in the sequential order of the prophets; it is also the last prophetic book produced in pre-Christian times. Its messages show that it was written after the time of the kingdom of Judah, when a governor ruled over the country (ch. 1:8), a fact that points to the Persian period. The Temple was apparently rebuilt, and sacrifices were regularly offered at the time of the prophet's activity (ch. 1:7–10). The various abuses rebuked by Malachi are mostly the same as those Nehemiah found when he returned to Jerusalem for his second term of governorship (Mal. 3:8, 9; cf. Neh. 13:10–12; Mal. 2:11–16; cf. Neh. 13:23–27).

Unfortunately, Nehemiah's second term as governor cannot be dated, which fact makes it also somewhat difficult to date Malachi. Nehemiah's first term lasted from 444 to 432 B.C. (ch. 5:14), after which he was recalled to Persia. There, he spent an unknown number of years before his return to Judea and his discovery of the abuses described in ch. 13. These were remedied by the vigorous actions of the governor. This leads us to conclude that Malachi's work may have followed Nehemiah's first term as governor, but preceded his return to Jerusalem from the Persian capital. Accordingly, the book can probably be dated about 425 B.C.

The Role of Israel in Old Testament Prophecy

I. Introduction

THIS article surveys the fundamental problem of the interpretation of the prophetic portions of the Old Testament in terms of their message to Israel of old and to the church today. Consideration is given to the role of literal Israel as God's chosen people, to the way His plan for them was to have been accomplished, to the way in which it actually did work out, and to the eventual transfer of the privileges and responsibilities of literal Israel to spiritual Israel, that is, to the Christian church. A clear understanding of these aspects of the problem is essential to the formulation of a valid procedure for interpreting the messages of the Old Testament prophets. Any interpretation that fails to give these matters due consideration does violence to the Scriptures.

Few passages of Scripture are more commonly misunderstood and variously interpreted than those containing the divine promises made to ancient Israel through the prophets. It is an undeniable historical fact that, to this day, the majority of these predictions have not been fulfilled. In the endeavor to account for this seeming enigma, Bible expositors have set forth various explanations:

1. The modernist school of interpretation denies the predictive element in prophecy altogether, arguing either that the "predictions" were written down after the events thus "foretold" took place or that such "predictions" reflected nothing more than the prophet's hopes for the future, or those of his people.
2. The futurist school of interpretation contends that the many promises of restoration and world leadership made to ancient Israel are yet to be fulfilled in connection with the establishment of the modern state of Israel in Palestine.
3. The British-Israel movement teaches that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are the literal descendants of the ten so-called "lost tribes" of the northern kingdom and that the promises will, in large measure, be fulfilled to their modern posterity.
4. A less-well-defined school of interpretation bases its approach to the prophetic portions of the Old Testament on the theory that the prophet, while bearing messages to the people of his day, also took occasional excursions into the distant future, with the result that many of his forecasts did not apply to literal Israel at all, but were intended exclusively for "Israel after the spirit," that is, for the church today. Following this line of interpretation, some have gone to the extreme of proposing a Christian migration to Palestine.
5. Seventh-day Adventists believe that, generally speaking, the promises and predictions given through the Old Testament prophets originally applied to literal Israel and were to have been fulfilled to them on the condition that they obey God and remain loyal to Him. But the Scriptures record the fact that they disobeyed God and proved disloyal to Him instead. Accordingly, what He purposed to do for the world through Israel of old He will finally accomplish through His church on earth today, and many of the promises originally made to literal Israel will be fulfilled to His remnant people at the close of time.

The modernist school of interpretation bases its position on the a priori assumption that any knowledge of the future is impossible, and ignores all evidence to the contrary. The futurist school ignores both the conditional element pervading predictive prophecy, clearly and emphatically proclaimed by the prophets themselves, and the specific statements of the New Testament that affirm that the privileges and responsibilities of ancient Israel have, in Christ, been transferred to the church. The exposition of Scripture

attempted by proponents of the British-Israel theory consists of an admixture of selected Bible passages with legend, folk tales, and speculation. The fourth school of interpretation may, at times, arrive at a valid application of the predictive portions of Old Testament prophecy to the church today and to its future experience, but neglects the primary application of these messages to their historical setting, and proceeds, quite arbitrarily, to determine that certain selected passages were written more or less exclusively for the church today. In one way or another each of these attempts at interpreting the messages of the Old Testament prophets neglects significant teachings of Scripture, evades fundamental principles of exegesis, and provides a distorted picture of the predictive sections of prophecy. The following discussion sets forth the principles of interpretation described under “5,” and followed by this commentary, together with the scriptural basis on which these principles rest.

II. Israel as God’s Chosen People

With the call of Abraham, God set in operation a definite plan for bringing the Messiah into the world and for presenting the gospel invitation to all men (Gen. 12:1–3; PP 125; PK 368). In Abraham God found a man ready to yield unqualified obedience to the divine will (Gen. 26:5; Heb. 11:8) and to cultivate a similar spirit in his posterity (Gen. 18:19). Accordingly, Abraham became in a special sense the “Friend of God” (James 2:23) and “the father of all them that believe” (Rom. 4:11). God entered into solemn covenant relationship with him (Gen. 15:18; 17:2–7), and his posterity, Israel, inherited the sacred trust of being God’s chosen representatives on earth (Heb. 11:9; PP 125) for the salvation of the entire human race. Salvation was to be “*of the Jews*,” in that the Messiah would be a Jew (John 4:22), and *by the Jews*, as messengers of salvation to all men (Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:18; Isa. 42:1, 6; 43:10; Gal. 3:8, 16, 18; COL 286).

At Mt. Sinai God entered into covenant relation with Israel as a nation (Ex. 19:1–8; 24:3–8; Deut. 7:6–14; PP 303; DA 76, 77) upon the same basic conditions and with the same ultimate objectives as the Abrahamic covenant. They voluntarily accepted God as their sovereign, and this constituted the nation a theocracy (PP 379, 603). The sanctuary became God’s dwelling place among them (see Ex. 25:8), its priests were ordained to minister before Him (Heb. 5:1; 8:3), its services provided an object lesson of the plan of salvation and prefigured the coming of the Messiah (1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:16, 17; Heb. 9:1–10; 10:1–12). The people might approach God personally and through the ministry of a mediating priesthood, their representatives before Him; He would direct the nation through the ministry of prophets, His appointed representatives to them. From generation to generation these “holy men of God” (2 Peter 1:21) called Israel to repentance and righteousness and kept alive the Messianic hope. By divine appointment the sacred writings were preserved, century after century, and Israel became their custodian (Amos 3:7; Rom. 3:1, 2; cf. PP 126).

The establishment of the Hebrew monarchy did not affect the basic principles of the theocracy (Deut. 17:14–20; 1 Sam. 8:7; PP 603). The state was still to be administered in the name, and by the authority, of God. Even during the Captivity, and later under foreign tutelage, Israel remained a theocracy in theory if not fully in practice. Only when its leaders formally rejected the Messiah and declared before Pilate their allegiance to “no king but Caesar” (John 19:15) did Israel as a nation irrevocably withdraw from the covenant relationship and the theocracy (DA 737, 738).

Through Israel of old, God planned to provide the nations of earth with a living revelation of His own holy character (COL 286; PK 368) and an exhibit of the glorious heights to which man can attain by cooperating with His infinite purposes. At the same time, He permitted the heathen nations to “walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16), to furnish an example of what man can accomplish apart from Him. Thus, for more than 1,500 years, a great experiment designed to test the relative merits of good and evil was conducted before the world (PP 314). Finally, “it was demonstrated before the universe that, apart from God, humanity could not be uplifted,” and that “a new element of life and power must be imparted by Him who made the world” (DA 37).

III. The Ideal: How the Plan Was to Operate

God placed His people in Palestine, the crossroads of the ancient world, and provided them with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the face of the earth (COL 288). It was His purpose to set them “on high above all nations of the earth” (Deut. 28:1; PK 368, 369), with the result that “all people of the earth” would recognize their superiority and call them “blessed” (Mal. 3:10, 12). Unparalleled prosperity, both temporal and spiritual, was promised them as the reward for putting into practice the righteous and wise principles of heaven (Deut. 4:6–9; 7:12–15; 28:1–14; PK 368, 369, 704). It was to be the result of wholehearted cooperation with the will of God as revealed through the prophets, and of divine blessing added to human efforts (see DA 811, 827; cf. PP 214).

The success of Israel was to be based on and to include:

- 1. Holiness of character** (Lev. 19:2; see on Matt. 5:48). Without this, the people of Israel would not qualify to receive the material blessings God designed to bestow upon them. Without this, the many advantages would only result in harm to themselves and to others. Their own characters were to be progressively ennobled and elevated, and to reflect more and more perfectly the attributes of the perfect character of God (Deut. 4:9; 28:1, 13, 14; 30:9, 10; see COL 288, 289). Spiritual prosperity was to prepare the way for material prosperity.
- 2. The blessings of health.** Feebleness and disease were to disappear entirely from Israel as the result of strict adherence to healthful principles (see Ex. 15:26; Deut. 7:13, 15; etc.; PP 378, 379; COL 288).
- 3. Superior intellect.** Cooperation with the natural laws of body and mind would result in ever-increasing mental strength, and the people of Israel would be blessed with vigor of intellect, keen discrimination, and sound judgment. They were to be far in advance of other nations in wisdom and understanding (PK 368). They were to become a nation of intellectual geniuses, and feebleness of mind would eventually have been unknown among them (see PP 378; cf. DA 827; COL 288).
- 4. Skill in agriculture and animal husbandry.** As the people cooperated with the directions God gave them in regard to the culture of the soil, the land would gradually be restored to Edenic fertility and beauty (Isa. 51:3). It would become an object lesson of the results of acting in harmony with moral, as with natural, law. Pests and diseases, flood and drought, crop failure—all these would eventually disappear. See Deut. 7:13; 28:2–8; Mal. 3:8–11; COL 289.
- 5. Superior craftsmanship.** The Hebrew people were to acquire wisdom and skill in all “cunning work,” that is, a high degree of inventive genius and ability as artisans, for the manufacture of all kinds of utensils and mechanical devices. Technical know-how would

render products “made in Israel” superior to all others. See Ex. 31:2–6; 35:33, 35; COL 288.

6. **Unparalleled prosperity.** “Obedience to the law of God would make them marvels of prosperity before the nations of the world,” living witnesses to the greatness and majesty of God (Deut. 8:17, 18; 28:11–13; COL 288; DA 577).
7. **National greatness.** As individuals and as a nation God proposed to furnish the people of Israel “with every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth” (COL 288; see Deut 4:6–8; 7:6, 14; 28:1; Jer. 33:9; Mal. 3:12; PP 273, 314; Ed 40; DA 577). He purposed to make them an honor to His name and a blessing to the nations about them (Ed 40; COL 286).

As the nations of antiquity should behold Israel’s unprecedented progress, their attention and interest would be aroused. “Even the heathen would recognize the superiority of those who served and worshiped the living God” (COL 289). Desiring the same blessings for themselves, they would make inquiry as to how they too might acquire these obvious material advantages. Israel would reply, “Accept our God as your God, love and serve Him as we do, and He will do the same for you.” “The blessings thus assured Israel” were, “on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens” (PK 500, 501; see Acts 10:34, 35; 15:7–9; Rom. 10:12, 13; etc.). All nations of earth were to share in the blessings so generously bestowed upon Israel (PK 370).

This concept of the role of Israel is reiterated again and again throughout the Old Testament. God was to be glorified in Israel (Isa. 49:3) and its people were to be His witnesses (chs. 43:10; 44:8), to reveal to men the principles of His kingdom (COL 285). They were to show forth His praise (ch. 43:21), to declare His glory among the heathen (ch. 66:19), to be “a light to the Gentiles” (chs. 49:6; 42:6, 7). All men would recognize that Israel stood in a special relationship to the God of heaven (Deut. 7:6–14; 28:10; Jer. 16:20, 21). Beholding Israel’s “righteousness” (Isa. 62:1, 2), “the Gentiles” would “acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed” (Isa. 61:9, 10; cf. Mal. 3:12), and their God the only true God (Isa. 45:14; PP 314). To their own question, “What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them?” the Gentiles would answer, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Deut. 4:7, 6). Hearing of all the advantages with which the God of Israel had blessed His people and “all the prosperity” He had procured for them (Jer. 33:9), the pagan nations would admit that their own fathers had “inherited lies” (ch. 16:19).

The material advantages that Israel enjoyed were designed to arrest the attention and catch the interest of the heathen, for whom the less obvious spiritual advantages had no natural attraction. They would “gather themselves together” and “come from far” (Isa. 49:18, 12, 6, 8, 9, 22; Ps. 102:22). “from the ends of the earth” (Jer. 16:19), to the light of truth shining forth from the “mountain of the Lord” (Isa. 2:3; 60:3; 56:7; cf. ch. 11:9, 10). Nations that had known nothing of the true God would “run” to Jerusalem because of the manifest evidence of divine blessing that attended Israel (ch. 55:5). Ambassadors from one foreign country after another would come to discover, if they might, the great secret of Israel’s success as a nation, and its leaders would have the opportunity of directing the minds of their visitors to the Source of all good things. From the visible their minds were to be directed to the invisible, from the seen to the unseen, from the material to the spiritual, from the temporal to the eternal. For a graphic picture of how one nation would

have responded to the irresistible appeal radiating from an Israel faithful to God, see Isa. 19:18–22; cf. Ps. 68:31.

Returning to their homelands, the Gentile ambassadors would counsel their fellow countrymen, “Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord” (Zech. 8:21, 22; cf. 1 Kings 8:41–43). They would send messengers to Israel with the declaration, “We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:23). Nation after nation would “come over” (Isa. 45:14), that is, “be joined with” and “cleave to the house of Jacob” (ch. 14:1). The house of God in Jerusalem would eventually “be called an house of prayer for all people” (ch. 56:7), and “many people and strong nations” would “come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before” Him “in that day” and be His people (Zech. 8:22; 2:11). The “sons of the stranger [or Gentile, 1 Kings 8:41; see on Ex. 12:19, 43]” would “join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord” (Isa. 56:6; Zech. 2:11). The gates of Jerusalem would be “open continually” to receive the “wealth” contributed to Israel for the conversion of still other nations and peoples (Isa. 60:1–11, RSV; Ps. 72:10; Isa. 45:14; Haggai 2:7, RSV). Eventually, “all the nations” would “call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord” and “be gathered unto it,” not to “walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart” (Jer. 3:17). “All who ... turned from idolatry to the worship of the true God, were to unite themselves with His chosen people. As the numbers of Israel increased, they were to enlarge their borders, until their kingdom should embrace the world” (COL 290; cf. Dan. 2:35). Thus Israel was to “blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isa. 27:6).

These promises of prosperity and a successful mission were to have “met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God’s design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as to-day the way is preparing for His second coming” (PK 703, 704). In spite of Israel’s ultimate failure, a limited knowledge of the true God and of the Messianic hope was widespread when the Saviour was born (see on >Matt. 2:1). If the nation had been faithful to its trust and had appreciated the high destiny reserved for it by God, the whole earth would have awaited the coming of the Messiah with eager expectancy. He would have come, He would have died, and would have risen again. Jerusalem would have become a great missionary center (COL 232), and the earth would have been set ablaze with the light of truth in one grand, final appeal to those who had not as yet accepted the invitation of divine mercy. God’s call to the nations would have been, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth” (Isa. 45:22). See on Zech. 1:8.

Had Jerusalem known what it was her privilege to know, and heeded the light that Heaven sent her, she would have stood forth in magnificent prosperity, “the queen of kingdoms,” “the mighty metropolis of the earth” (DA 577), and would, like a noble vine, have filled “the face of the world with fruit” (Isa. 27:6). “Had Israel as a nation preserved her allegiance to Heaven, Jerusalem would have stood forever, the elect of God” (GC 19; cf. PK 46; Jer. 7:7; 17:25).

After the great final call to the world to acknowledge the true God, those who persisted in refusing allegiance to Him would unite together with the “evil thought” of laying siege to the city of Jerusalem and taking it by force of arms, in order to appropriate to themselves the material advantages with which God had blessed His people (Eze.

38:8–12; Jer. 25:32; Joel 3:1, 12; Zech. 12:2–9; 14:2; cf. Rev. 17:13, 14, 17). During the siege, reprobate Israelites would be slain by their foes (Zech. 13:8; 14:2). In the prophetic picture God is represented as gathering the nations to Jerusalem (Joel 3:1, 2; Zeph. 3:6–8; cf. Eze. 38:16, 18–23; 39:1–7). He has a controversy with them because they have rebelled against His authority (Jer. 25:31–33), and He will judge (Joel 3:9–17) and destroy them there (Isa. 34:1–8; 63:1–6; 66:15–18). Any “nation and kingdom” that would “not serve” Israel was to “perish” ch. (60:12). “Those nations that rejected the worship and service of the true God, were to be dispossessed” (COL 290), and Israel would “inherit the Gentiles” ch. (54:3).

The earth would thus be rid of those who opposed God (Zech. 14:12, 13). He would be “king over all the earth” vs. (3, 8, 9), and His dominion “from sea even to sea,” even to “the ends of the earth” (ch. 9:9, 10). In that day “every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 14:16; cf. ch. 9:7; Isa. 66:23).

IV. Israel’s Failure to Carry Out God’s Plan

God provided Israel with “every facility for becoming the greatest nation on the earth” (COL 288). When they “brought forth wild grapes” instead of the mature fruit of character, He inquired, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?” (Isa. 5:1–7). There was nothing God could have done for them that He did not do, yet they failed. It was “their unwillingness to submit to the restrictions and requirements of God” that “prevented them, to a great extent, from reaching the high standard which He desired them to attain, and from receiving the blessings which He was ready to bestow upon them” (PP 378).

Those in Israel who put forth their best efforts to cooperate with the revealed will of God realized, personally, a measure of the benefits He had promised. Thus it had been with Enoch (Gen. 5:24), Abraham (ch. 26:5), and Joseph (ch. 39:2–6; PP 214). Thus it was with Moses, of whom, to the very day of his death, it could be said that “his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (Deut. 34:7). Thus it was with Daniel, “a bright example of what man may become, even in this life, if he will make God his strength and wisely improve the opportunities and privileges within his reach” (4T 569; see Dan. 1:8–20; PK 490; cf. DA 827). Thus it was also with Samuel (PP 573, 574), Elijah (COL 301), John the Baptist (see on Matt. 3:4), John the Beloved (see on Mark 3:17), and many others. The life of Christ is a perfect example of the character of God would have His people develop (see on Luke 2:52). “Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached” (Ed 18).

The glorious era of David and Solomon marked what might have been the beginning of Israel’s golden age (see PK 32, 33). One royal visitor to Jerusalem exclaimed, “The half was not told me!” (1 Kings 10:1–9). The glory that distinguished the early part of the reign of Solomon was due in part to his own faithfulness during that time, and in part to the fact that his father David had seemed to appreciate fully Israel’s exalted privileges and responsibilities (see Ps. 51:10, 11; Isa. 55:3; cf. Acts 13:22).

Before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, God warned them not to forget that the blessings they were to enjoy there if they cooperated with Him would come as divine gifts (see Deut. 8:7–14), not primarily as the result of their own wisdom and skill (vs. 17–19). Solomon made his great mistake when he failed to realize the secret of Israel’s

prosperity (see Introduction to Ecclesiastes), and with a few noteworthy exceptions, leaders and people sank lower and lower from generation to generation until apostasy was complete (Isa. 3:12; 9:16; Jer. 5:1–5; 8:10; Eze. 22:23–31; Micah 3).

The kingdom was divided following Solomon's death (see 1 Kings 11:33–38). This division, though tragic, served to insulate, for a time, the southern kingdom, Judah, from the tide of idolatry that soon engulfed the northern kingdom, Israel (see Hosea 4:17). In spite of the bold and zealous efforts of such prophets as Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea, the northern kingdom rapidly deteriorated and was eventually carried into Assyrian captivity. Its people were given "no promise of complete restoration to their former power in Palestine" (PK 298).

Had Judah remained loyal to God its captivity would not have been necessary (PK 564). Again and again He had warned His people that captivity would be the result of disobedience (see Deut. 4:9; 8:9; 28:1, 2, 14, 18; Jer. 18:7–10; 26:2–16; Zech. 6:15; etc.). He had told them that He would progressively diminish their strength and honor as a nation until they should all be carried away into captivity (Deut. 28:15–68; 2 Chron. 36:16, 17). God designed that Israel's experience should prove to be a warning to Judah (see Hosea 1:7; 4:15–17; 11:12; Jer. 3:3–12; etc.). But Judah failed to learn the lesson, and a little more than a century later her apostasy, also, was complete (see Jer. 22:6, 8, 9; Eze. 16:37; 7:2–15; 12:3–28; 36:18–23). The kingdom was overturned (Eze. 21:25–32) and the people removed from the land, which had been theirs only by virtue of the covenant relationship (Hosea 9:3, 15, Micah 2:10; cf. Hosea 2:6–13). Deported to Babylon, they were to learn in adversity the lessons they had failed to learn during times of prosperity (Jer. 25:5–7; 29:18, 19; 30:11–14; 46:28; Eze. 20:25–38; Micah 4:10–12; DA 28), and to impart to the heathen Babylonians a knowledge of the true God (PK 292, 371, 372). For the prophetic guidance during the Captivity see p. 569.

God did not forsake His people, even during the Captivity. He would renew His covenant with them (Jer. 31:10–38; Eze. 36:21–38; Zech. 1:12, 17; 2:12), including its accompanying blessings (Jer. 33:3, 6–26; Eze. 36:8–15). All that had been promised might yet come to pass if they would only love and serve Him (Zech. 6:15; cf. Isa. 54:7; Eze. 36:11; 43:10, 11; Micah 6:8; Zech. 10:6). According to His beneficent purpose, the covenant promises were to have "met fulfillment in large measure during the centuries following the return of the Israelites from the lands of their captivity. It was God's design that the whole earth be prepared for the first advent of Christ, even as to-day the way is preparing for His second coming" (PK 703, 704).

It is important to note that all the Old Testament promises looking forward to a time of restoration for the Jews were given in anticipation of their return from captivity (see Isa. 10:24–34; 14:1–7; 27:12, 13; 40:2; 61:4–10; Jer. 16:14–16; 23:3–8; 25:11; 29:10–13; 30:3–12; 32:7–27, 37–44; Eze. 34:11–15; 37; Amos 9:10–15; Micah 2:12, 13; etc.). Daniel himself so understood these promises (Dan. 9:1–8). Captivity, he said, had "confirmed" the "curse" that came because of disobedience (vs. 11, 12) and Jerusalem lay desolate (vs. 16–19). Then Gabriel came to reassure him of the restoration of his people and the eventual coming of the Messiah (vs. 24, 25). But, said the angel, Messiah would be rejected and "cut off," because of the abominations of Israel, and Jerusalem and the Temple would once more lie waste (vs. 26, 27). Between the return from Babylon and the rejection of the Messiah, Israel was to have its second and final opportunity as a nation to cooperate with the divine plan (see Jer. 12:14–17). "Seventy weeks"—490 years

of literal time—were “determined” upon the Jews, “to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness” (Dan. 9:24).

Eventually, however, it became apparent that the Jews would never measure up to the standard God required of them, as Malachi makes evident (chs. 1:6, 12; 2:2, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17; 3:7, 13, 14; PK 705). Formal worship took the place of sincere religion (DA 29; cf. John 4:23, 24; 2 Tim. 3:5). Human traditions came to be honored in place of the revealed will of God (see on Mark 7:6–9). Far from becoming the light of the world, the Jews “shut themselves away from the world as a safeguard against being seduced into idolatry” (PK 708; see Deut. 11:26, 27; cf. Mark 7:9). In their meticulous attention to the letter of the law they lost sight of its spirit. They forgot that God abhors a multiplication of the forms of religion (Isa. 1:11–18; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:7; Mal. 2:13), and asks of man nothing “but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly” with his God (Micah 6:8; cf. Matt. 19:16, 17; 22:36–40). Yet in mercy, God still bore with His people, and in due time Messiah came (Mal. 3:1–3; DA 37). To the very last, “Christ would have averted the doom of the Jewish nation if the people had received Him” (PK 712). When the probationary period of 490 years ended, the nation was still obdurate and impenitent, and as a result forfeited its privileged role as His representative on earth.

V. Why Israel Failed

Israel’s “unwillingness to submit to the restrictions and requirements of God, prevented them, to a great extent, from reaching the high standard He desired them to attain, and from receiving the blessings He was ready to bestow upon them” (PP 378). They cherished the idea that they were favorites of Heaven (COL 294), and were ungrateful for the opportunities so graciously afforded them (COL 302; cf. 391). They forfeited God’s blessing because of failure to fulfill His purpose in making them His chosen people, and thus brought ruin upon themselves (COL 284, 290; PK 705).

When Messiah came, His own people, the Jews, “received him not” (John 1:11). They blindly “overlooked those scriptures that point to the humiliation of Christ’s first advent, and misapplied those that speak of the glory of His second coming. Pride obscured their vision [see Luke 19:42]. They interpreted prophecy in accordance with their selfish desires” (DA 30; cf. 212, 257), because their ambitious hopes were fixed on worldly greatness (DA 28). They looked for Messiah to reign as a temporal prince (DA 415; cf. Acts 1:6), to appear as a liberator and conqueror, and to exalt Israel to dominion over all nations (PK 709; see on Luke 4:19). They would have no part in all that Christ stood for (see on Matt. 3:2, 3; Mark 3:14; DA 243, 391). They eagerly sought the power of His kingdom, but were unwilling to be guided by its principles. They grasped at the material blessings so generously offered them, but refused the spiritual graces that would have transformed their lives and fitted them to be His representatives. They brought forth “wild grapes” rather than the mature fruit of a Godlike character (Isa. 5:1–7; cf. Gal. 5:19–23), and because of this failure to bear the fruit expected of them, forfeited their role in the divine plan (see Rom. 11:20).

Having declined, thus, to surrender themselves to God as His agents for the salvation of the human race, the Jews, as a nation, became “agents of Satan” for the destruction of the race (DA 36). Instead of becoming light bearers to the world they absorbed its darkness and reflected that darkness instead. They were doing no positive good; therefore they were doing incalculable harm, and their influence became a savor of death (COL

304). “In view of the light they had received from God, they were even worse than the heathen, to whom they felt so much superior” (DA 106; COL 293). “They rejected the Light of the world, and henceforth their lives were surrounded with darkness as the darkness of midnight” (PK 712, 713).

In these tragic events the words of Moses met their final and complete fulfillment: “As the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goes to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other” (Deut. 28:63, 64). The completeness and finality of this rejection is evident from ch. 8:19, 20: “As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.” The rejection of Jesus by the leaders of Israel (cf. Isa. 3:12; 9:16) meant the permanent, irrevocable cancellation of their special standing before God as a nation (COL 305; cf. Jer. 12:14–16).

At the time of the Babylonian captivity God had specifically announced that that experience was not to mark “a full end” of Israel as God’s people (Jer. 4:27; 5:18; 46:28). But when the Jews rejected Christ there was no such assurance of reinstatement. The present-day return of the Jews to Palestine and the establishment of the modern state of Israel do not imply reinstatement as God’s people, present or future. Whatever the Jews, as a nation, may do, now or in time to come, is in no way related to the former promises made to them. With the crucifixion of Christ they forever forfeited their special position as God’s chosen people. Any idea that the return of the Jews to their ancestral home, that is, to the new state of Israel, may in any way be related to Bible prophecy is without valid scriptural foundation. It ignores the plain statements of the Old Testament that God’s promises to Israel were all conditional. (See p. 34.)

VI. The Nature and Purpose of Conditional Prophecy

God’s word is sure (Isa. 40:8; 55:11; Rom. 11:29), and His plan for the salvation of man will ultimately prevail (Isa. 46:10). With Him there is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8). His word “endureth for ever” (1 Peter 1:25). Eventually God’s purposes will prevail and the plan of salvation will succeed, irrespective of the failure of any person or group (PK 705, 706). The plan itself never changes because God never changes. But the manner in which it is carried out may change because man may change. The fickle, human will is the weak, unstable factor in conditional prophecy. God may reject one nation or group of people in favor of another if those first summoned persistently refuse to cooperate with Him (see Jer. 18:6–10; cf. Dan. 5:25–28; Matt. 21:40–43; 22:3–10; Luke 14:24). For illustrations of the reversal of threatened judgment, see Jonah 3:3–10; cf. 2 Kings 20:1–5; and of promised blessing, see Ex. 6:2–8; cf. Num. 14:26–34. The covenant with literal Israel proved faulty, not because God failed to carry out His part of the covenant, but rather because Israel’s fair promises proved evanescent as the morning dew (Hosea 6:4; 13:3; Heb. 8:6, 7). It should be remembered that God does not force the human will, and that Israel’s cooperation was essential to the success of His plan for the nation.

God’s promises are made conditional upon man’s cooperation and obedience. “The promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional” (EGW MS 4, 1883, in *The Testimony of Jesus*, p. 99). Again and again God warned Israel that blessing goes hand in

hand with obedience and that a curse accompanies disobedience (see Deut. 4:9; 8:19; 28:1, 2, 13, 14; Jer. 18:6–10; 26:2–6; Zech. 6:15; etc.). Continued obedience was necessary to the continuance of divine favor, whereas persistent disobedience must inevitably culminate in the rejection of the Jewish nation as God’s chosen instrument for carrying out the divine plan (Deut. 28:15–68). Owing to the failure of the Jews as God’s chosen people, many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, such as those affirming the worldwide mission of Israel and the ingathering of the Gentiles (see Gen. 12:3; Deut. 4:6–8; Isa. 2:2–5; 42:6; 49:6; 52:10; 56:6, 7; 60:1–3; 61:9; 62:2; Zech. 2:11; 8:22, 23; etc.), those pointing forward to the eternal rest in Canaan (Isa. 11:6–9; 35; 65:17–25; 66:20–23; Jer. 17:25; Eze. 37; 40–48; Zech. 2:6–12; 14:4–11), and those promising deliverance from her enemies (Isa. 2:10–21; 24–26; Eze. 38; 39; Joel 3; Zeph. 1; 2; Zech. 9:9–17; 10–14; etc.), have never been and can never be fulfilled to them as a nation.

Had Israel measured up to the noble ideal, all of the promises contingent upon obedience would long since have been fulfilled. Predictions of national disgrace, rejection, and woe that were to result from apostasy would never have been realized. But because of apostasy it was the predictions of national honor and glory that could not be fulfilled. Yet, since God’s purposes are immutable (Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; Isa. 46:10; Acts 5:39; Heb. 6:17; etc.), success must and will come—through Israel after the spirit. Though, on the whole, literal Israel failed to realize her exalted destiny, the chosen race did make a worth-while, though imperfect, contribution to the preparation of the world for the first advent of the Messiah (see on Matt. 2:1). Furthermore, it should be remembered that the Messiah, after the flesh, was a Jew, that the charter members of the Christian church were all Jews, and that Christianity grew out of Judaism.

VII. Spiritual Israel Replaces Literal Israel

The formal rejection of Jesus by the Jews, as a nation, marked the close of their last opportunity as the special agents of God for the salvation of the world. It was “last of all” that God “sent unto them his son,” according to Christ’s own words (Matt. 21:37), but they “caught him” and “slew him” (v. 39). Thereafter, God “let out his vineyard [see Isa. 5:1–7] unto other husbandmen” who would “render him the fruits in their seasons” (see on Matt. 21:41). Upon His final departure from the sacred precincts of the Temple, Jesus said, “Your house is left unto you desolate” (Matt. 23:38). The day, before, He had called it “my house” (ch. 21:13), but henceforth He no longer owned it as His. Jesus’ own verdict was, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43; cf. 1 Peter 2:9, 10).

The transition from literal Israel to spiritual Israel, or the Christian church, is the subject of Rom. 9–11. Here Paul affirms that the rejection of the Jews did not mean that the promises of God had “taken none effect” (Rom. 9:6), and explains immediately that they are to become effective through spiritual Israel. He quotes Hosea 2:23. “I will call them my people, which were not my people” (Rom. 9:25, 26). Spiritual Israel includes both Jews and Gentiles (v. 24). Peter concurs, saying, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons,” for “in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34, 35; cf. ch. 11:18). Many years later, in writing to the “strangers,” or Gentiles (1 Peter 1:1; see on Ex. 12:19, 43), as the “elect” of God (1 Peter 1:2), Peter refers to them as the “chosen” ones of God, a “holy nation, a peculiar people” (ch. 2:9), formerly “not a people,” but “now the people of God” (v. 10). Paul states the same truth in Rom. 9:30, 31, where he makes it plain that the Christian

church has replaced the Hebrew nation in the divine plan. Henceforth, he says, there is no difference between “Jew” and “Greek” (ch. 10:12, 13).

Paul emphasizes the fact that the rejection of literal Israel as God’s chosen instrument for the salvation of the world does not mean that individual Jews can no longer be saved (chs. 9:6; 11:1, 2, 11, 15), for he is a Jew himself (chs. 9:3; 10:1; 11:1, 2). But they are to be saved as Christians and not as Jews. It is true, he says, that national Israel “stumbled” at the “stumblingstone,” Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:32, 33; 11:11; cf. 1 Peter 2:6–8; 1 Cor. 1:23) but this need not mean that they are to fall—“God forbid,” he exclaims (Rom. 11:1, 22). Literal Jews may still find salvation by being grafted into spiritual Israel, in precisely the same way that Gentiles are to be grafted in (vs. 23, 24). “All Israel” consists of both Jews and Gentiles, thus “all Israel shall be saved” (Rom. 11:25, 26; PK 367). Paul makes it clear beyond argument that when he speaks of “Israel” as the chosen people of God he means it in this sense. He says specifically that by “Jew” he does not mean a literal Jew but one converted at heart, whether he be Jew or Gentile (ch. 2:28, 29). All who have faith in Christ are one in Him, and, as a the spiritual “seed” of Abraham, are “heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:9, 28, 29).

“That which God purposed to do for the world through Israel, the chosen nation, He will finally accomplish through His church on earth to-day” (PK 713, 714). The glorious promises originally made to literal Israel are meeting their fulfillment today in the proclamation of the gospel to all men (PK 374, 375; GC 451; Rev. 14:6, 7). “The blessings thus assured to Israel are, on the same conditions and in the same degree, assured to every nation and to every individual under the broad heavens” (PK 500, 501; cf. 298). “The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great privileges and blessings, and He expects corresponding returns. ... In the lives of God’s people the truths of His word are to reveal their glory and excellence. Through His people Christ is to manifest His character and the principles of His kingdom” (COL 296). Now it is spiritual Israel, in the past “not a people” but “now the people of God,” that are to “shew forth the praises” of the One who has called them “out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

We should never forget that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written” for the “learning” of future generations to the end of time, to inspire patience, comfort, and hope (Rom. 15:4). They were “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

The prophets did not always clearly understand messages they themselves had borne pointing forward to the distant future, to the coming of the Messiah (1 Peter 1:10, 11). These repeated Messianic predictions were designed to lift the eyes of the people from the transitory events of their own time to the coming of Messiah and the establishment of His eternal kingdom, in order to afford them a view of the things of time in the light of eternity. However, these messages pertaining to the then-distant future were intended, not only to inspire patience, comfort, and hope in the day they were first given, but also to provide men of Christ’s day with confirming evidence of His Messiahship. The profound conviction that the messages of the prophets had been fulfilled led many to believe in Christ as the Son of God (DA 775, 799). The prophets thus provided a firm foundation for the faith of the apostolic church and made a direct and vital contribution to the Christian faith.

It was therefore not alone “unto themselves” and to their contemporaries that the prophets ministered, but also to all sincere men and women of later generations (1 Peter 1:12). It is ever the privilege of those who witness the fulfillment of prophecy to “remember” and “believe” (John 13:19; 14:29; John 16:4). Prophecies that Inspiration clearly applies to our day were designed of God to inspire us with patience, comfort, and the hope that all things foretold by these holy men of old will soon meet their final and complete fulfillment.

VIII. Conclusion: Principles of Interpretation

In general, Old Testament promises and predictions were addressed to literal Israel and were to have been fulfilled to them, conditional on obedience. Partial compliance on their part with the will of God made possible a partial fulfillment of the covenant promises on God’s part. Yet many of the promises, particularly those concerning the giving of the gospel to the nations and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, could not be fulfilled to them because of their unfaithfulness, but would be fulfilled to the church on earth preparatory to Christ’s return, particularly to God’s remnant people, and in the new earth.

When the Jews rejected Christ as the Messiah, God in turn rejected them and commissioned the Christian church as His chosen instrument for the salvation of the world (Matt. 28:19, 20; 2 Cor. 5:18–20; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; etc.). Accordingly, the covenant promises and privileges were all permanently transferred from literal to spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:4; cf. Gal. 3:27–29; see on Deut. 18:15). Promises not already fulfilled to literal Israel either would never be fulfilled at all or would be fulfilled to the Christian church as spiritual Israel. Prophecies that fall into the latter classification are to be fulfilled *in principle* but not necessarily in every detail, owing to the fact that many details of prophecy were concerned with Israel as a literal nation situated in the land of Palestine. The Christian church is a spiritual “nation” scattered all over the world, and such details obviously could not apply to it in a literal sense. Prophecies of the former classification cannot now be fulfilled because they were strictly conditional in nature and limited in scope, by their very nature, to literal Israel.

The fundamental principle by which we can tell unerringly when any particular promise or prediction of the Old Testament made originally to literal Israel is to meet its fulfillment with respect to spiritual Israel is—*when a later inspired writer makes such an application of it*. For instance, the prophecy of the battle of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38, 39 was never fulfilled to literal Israel; but John the revelator assures us that in principle, though not necessarily in all details (such as those of Eze. 39:9–15), this battle will occur at the close of the millennium (Rev. 20:7–9). But to go beyond that which is clearly set forth by Inspiration—in the immediate context of the passage concerned, in the New Testament, or in the Spirit of prophecy—is to substitute personal opinion for a plain “Thus saith the Lord.” Where Inspiration has not thus clearly spoken it is our privilege to compare scripture with scripture in an endeavor to understand more perfectly the mind of the Spirit. But here, as in all exposition of Scripture, we should avoid affirming as the explicit teachings of the Bible that which is our private, finite view, however plausible it may appear to be. Furthermore, Old Testament prophecy must first be examined in terms of its historical application to literal Israel before the validity of a derived application to spiritual Israel may be undertaken.

One of the main objectives of the Bible commentator is to reconstruct the historical setting in which the declarations of the prophets were originally made. Christianity is a historical religion, and its inspired messages are anchored to the hills and valleys, the deserts and rivers, of the ancient world, and to literal men and women who once walked the earth. There is no surer protection against the speculative vagaries of religious visionaries than a clear knowledge of the historical context of Scripture.

Though the prophet looked at events about him, he also could see far beyond his own day. In a mysterious way known only to God the prophet's words were sometimes intended to meet their fulfillment in the then far-distant future. At times they had an import, not only for the age in which the prophet lived, but also for a day far future; in other words, they had a dual application. Similarly, the ways in which God dealt with men in crises of the past are often cited as examples of the manner in which He will deal with all the world in the last day (see on Deut. 18:15). For example, the judgment that came upon Sodom and Gomorrah, literal cities of the ancient past, is used by Bible writers as descriptive of the judgment God will eventually bring upon all the world.

The student of the Bible who hopes to secure from it the greatest help will first proceed to reconstruct the historical context of each passage. He will listen to the prophet speaking to Israel of old and endeavor to understand what his words meant to the people who originally heard them. But he will listen also for the further import the prophet's words may have for later times, particularly, our time. Indeed, this secondary application is for us today the more significant. But it is only against the background of the original historical context of the message that its meaning and value for us can be established with certainty.

A study of the Old Testament prophets that consists primarily of lifting selected passages here and there out of their historical context and arbitrarily applying them to our day—as if the prophet spoke exclusively for our benefit—is fraught with grave danger. In fact, this procedure is responsible more than anything else for the fanciful interpretations that distinguish the teachings of certain religious groups.

In an age when every wind of doctrine is blowing it is well to make certain that our understanding of Bible prophecy rests upon a positive “Thus saith the Lord” (see Deut. 29:29; Isa. 50:11; Jer. 2:13; Matt. 7:24–28; 1 Cor. 2:4, 5, 12, 13; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:2–4, 8; 2 Peter 1:16; Rev. 22:18). In so doing we shall be secure against the fanciful explanations sometimes given certain Old Testament prophecies. We shall be protected against the grossly literal explanation of some expositors concerning the return of literal Israel to literal Palestine to rule the world for a thousand years prior to the close of human probation, and also against other equally unscriptural interpretations that propose to apply allegorically to the church all the details of the promises originally made to literal Israel. Both of these extreme methods wrest the obvious intent of the Scriptures and render a sound understanding of the messages of the prophets for the church today unattainable.

The following simple rules are suggested as a safe approach to the study of each prophetic passage of the Old Testament:

1. Examine the prophecy in its entirety. Note by whom it was spoken, to whom it was addressed, and the circumstances that called it forth. Remember that—generally speaking—it was originally given with respect to the historical circumstances that called it forth. It was ordained of God to meet the needs of His people at the time it was given and to remind them of the glorious destiny that awaited them as a nation, of the coming

of the Messiah, and of the establishment of His eternal kingdom. Discover what the message meant to the people of that time. (This rule does not apply to those portions of the book of Daniel that the prophet was bidden to “shut up” and “seal,” or to other passages whose application Inspiration may have limited exclusively to our own time.)

2. Observe the conditional aspects of the prediction and ascertain whether or not, or to what extent, the conditions were met.
3. Discover what application later inspired writers make of the prophecy, and on this basis determine its possible significance for God’s people in this time.
4. Remember that the record of God’s dealings with His people in ages past has been recorded for the benefit of all later generations to the end of time. Our study of messages originally proclaimed by holy men of old to the people of their day is not to become an end in itself, but a means of discovering the will of God for all who would render Him truehearted service now, at the climax of the ages. The voice of God through the prophets distinctly speaks to us today.

If these rules are consistently followed the resulting interpretation can be accepted with confidence. In the inspired utterances of the prophets of old the sincere seeker for truth will thus find messages of inspiration, comfort, and guidance for today.

History of the Interpretation of Daniel

I. Progressive Understanding of Prophecy Covers Centuries

THE sound understanding, or interpretation, of the several prophecies comprising the book of Daniel has been built up progressively over the course of centuries. In fact, it began back in the time of Daniel, who was himself the first expositor of certain basic features of the outline prophecies that God gave to mankind through him. Then, as fast and as far as historical development fulfilled each major epoch or event of the great prophetic outlines, reverent students of prophecy have recognized the succeeding developments largely as they have taken place. The unfolding has been both progressive and impressive.

And while, at times, there have been major perversions and repudiations of the sound principles and specific developments previously perceived, and periods of neglect and abandonment of interest and confidence in the prophecies themselves, no true applications have ever been permanently lost. They have always, in time, been recovered and reaffirmed, and carried forward to still clearer and fuller understanding. This has been true from Daniel’s day on to our own time. The history of the prophetic interpretation of this inspired book (2 Peter 1:19–21) has therefore been the outreach of man to understand the true meaning of Daniel’s grand outline of the centuries, as fast and as far as it could be understood under the general proviso set forth by Jesus concerning such predictions—These things have been spoken unto you that, when they come to pass, ye may believe (John 14:29; cf. 13:19; 16:4).

With such a general introductory statement before us, let us now note a series of historical facts and developments that will furnish the essential background and setting for the development of the specific interpretations that will then be traced. Such a general panoramic view will make the developments of the individual phases of exposition clearer and more significant.

Book of Daniel to Be Understood.—Christ Himself, in enunciating His own marvelous prophecy as recorded in Matt. 24 and paralleling passages, said of “Daniel the

prophet,” “Whoso readeth, let him understand” (v. 15). That is ample justification for studying this prophetic book, and divine assurance that it may be understood.

Only Portion of Book Sealed.—The explicit statement is on record—and is fully borne out by the history of the progressive exposition of Daniel—that “the book that was sealed is not the Revelation, but that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days” (AA 585). And historically it was not until the “time of the end” had actually been entered, in the early 19th century, that there occurred the simultaneous breaking forth of numerous expositions of the longest time prophecy, that of the 2300 days. The preparatory steps, however, covered centuries.

Beginning of Daniel’s Prophetic Outline.—Daniel himself provides the starting point, accepted as axiomatic by the long line of interpreters, with the inspired declaration that the great prophetic outlined, revealed and repeated to him by inspiration, began with the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Thus, “Thou [the Babylonian Empire, with Nebuchadnezzar as its ruler] art this head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). But “after thee [the Babylonian Empire] shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee” (v. 39). Then in parallel passages Daniel indicates the identity of the second and third world powers by name—specifically, the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires (Dan. 5:28, 31; 6:12, 15, 28; 8:20, 21). Thus not only the starting point but the developments immediately following, of Daniel’s united prophecy, are incontestably established in grand outline by Inspiration. So Daniel himself constitutes the first expositor. From then on students of prophecy were to compare historical fulfillment with the prediction, as it should come to pass, and thus determine the progressive fulfillment of succeeding aspects. And much of the Revelation was the unfolding and the complement of Daniel.

Interpreters Include Ablest Men.—The records attest that the interpreters of Daniel have embraced many of the most conspicuous and reverent scholars of the succeeding centuries. There is no occasion for embarrassment as to the origin of historically established interpretation.

Fulfillments Recognized by Many Individuals.—Every major application of prophecy has been discerned, not by one single individual, but by a number of men, usually in different lands, who have left for posterity the record of their understanding, and this in different languages. God has always had a number of witnesses to attest His unfolding truth.

Time and Developments Correct Inaccuracies.—Time, together with the historical perspective that it provides, has made it possible for later students to correct the inaccuracies incident to the earlier expositions, with their inevitable limitations. But these earlier pathfinding expositors are to be duly honored for their pioneering part in the advancing exposition that is our heritage today. And it is highly desirable to know these backgrounds.

Time Prophecies Recognized as Fulfilled.—The 70 weeks were early recognized as representing “weeks” of years, but the time for the understanding of the 2300 evening-mornings and of their relationship to the 70 weeks was then far future. And the time for understanding the periods pertaining to developments in the subsequent Christian Era—that is, the 1260 year-days of the great apostasy (and the equivalent 3½ times, or 42 months)—would not come until this great departure from the Christian faith had actually developed and until the predicted perversion and repression of truth and its champions

were far enough advanced to be clearly discerned. Thus the little horn of Dan. 7 was not recognized until centuries after its rise.

Early Church Exposition Eclipsed.—The clear expositions of the earliest centuries of the Christian Era were progressively distorted and misapplied as apostasy progressed. The prophecies began to be allegorized and spiritualized away under the blighting influence of Origen (c. 185–c. 254), illustrious philosopher-theologian of Alexandria. Indeed, the whole of Scripture was at this time being subjected to this same spiritualizing, allegorizing, mysticizing process.

The resurrection was likewise spiritualized by Origen into a series of reincarnations. The kingdom of God was materialized and carnalized by Eusebius Pamphili (c. 260–c. 340), bishop of Caesarea and church historian, following the alleged conversion of Constantine the Great and his consequent recognition, protection, and material enrichment of the Christian church.

To the departures of Origen and Eusebius was added a third revolutionary concept, popularized by Augustine (354–430), influential bishop of Hippo. Augustine held that the first resurrection was spiritual (that of dead souls raised to spiritual life), and maintained that the kingdom of God was none other than the developing Catholic Church, the stone of Dan. 2:34, 45, then in process of becoming the mountain that was destined to fill the whole earth, and that the devil was already bound, and mankind was already living in the period of the thousand years of the Apocalypse. This became the belief of the dominant church of the Middle Ages.

These misconceptions, growing out of this allegorizing proclivity, well-nigh extinguished the light of true interpretation for centuries.

Sound Interpretation Revived.—The medieval revival of historical interpretation did not stem from the Waldenses and other groups outside the Roman Church who did not acknowledge the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, but from stalwart sons within the church, some of whom were constrained to cry out against its inconcealable perversions and to apply certain of the prophetic symbols of Scripture to their own church. It also included similar applications by certain Jewish writers as well. The growing line of dissenters, from the Renaissance onward, practically all drew support for their criticisms of the church from the prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse. These prophecies were now gradually regaining their rightful place in the minds of thoughtful men.

Reformation Based on Prophecies.—As all agree, the great Protestant Reformation was a rediscovery of the evangelical truths of the early church, dominant in the time of its greater purity. But an implementing power was provided by a new emphasis on the intent of the Biblical prophecies concerning the Antichrist. For two centuries prior to Luther, spiritual-minded men had with increasing clarity been emphasizing salvation through Christ, and had protested the gross perversions of Rome, while still staying within the Catholic Church. But when Luther grasped the truth of the prophetic identity of Antichrist—that nerved him, and hundreds of others in different lands, to break with Rome. In the light of the explicit and repeated prophetic depictions and admonitions, they felt impelled to “come out” of papal Babylon. As a consequence they would go to the dungeon or the stake rather than compromise over the now clearly discerned divine counsels. And all this was used as a rallying cry because the prophetic portrayal was ascendant in Reformation thinking and was now clearly discerned and applied.

Counter Reformation Injects Counterinterpretations.—The virtually unanimous incrimination of the papacy as the Antichrist of prophecy, by all Protestant groups in all lands, led Roman Catholic leaders to attempt to divert the accusing finger and to direct Protestant attention away from the medieval Catholic system. In this they were highly successful. Francisco Ribera and Luis de Alcazar, both 16th-century Spanish Jesuits, rose to meet the challenge by introducing plausible counterinterpretations of prophecy.

Ribera contended that Antichrist was a single individual, yet to come—an infidel ruler in Jerusalem, doing his exploits in 3½ literal years at the end of the age. In this he was strongly supported by the great Catholic controversialist Robert Cardinal Bellarmine. This device, which places Antichrist in the future, is well named the *Futurist* interpretation. This Futurist concept soon became the standard Roman Catholic interpretation of Antichrist, and is now held by practically all communications of that faith.

On the other hand, Alcazar projected what came to be called the *Preterist* (past) view, maintaining that practically all prophecy ended with the downfall of the Jewish church and nation and the forcible overthrow of pagan Rome, and that Antichrist was some pagan Roman emperor like Nero, Domitian, or Diocletian. The promulgation of these two views—Futurist and Preterist—presented the anomalous spectacle of two conflicting, and mutually exclusive, explanations springing from the same Roman Church. But they accomplished their purpose of confusing Protestant prophetic interpretation.

Reformation Recovery Blighted by Later Departures.—The counterinterpretation of the Jesuit Alcazar began to be adopted by such avowed Protestants as Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) of Holland and Henry Hammond (1605–1660) of England, bringing division and loss of confidence in the continuous historical view of the prophecies on the part of many Protestants. The result was a second lapse in sound interpretation, this time among Protestants. There were some, however, such as Joseph Mede, who not only were unmoved by the perversions, but were impelled to restudy the whole range of prophecy, and to reintroduce the future millennium and the Historical School of interpretation. This resulted in increasingly clear and sound exposition. Preterism penetrated the Rationalistic School of German theologians in the 18th century; in the 19th, Futurism came into vogue among Protestants, and in recent decades has come to be widely accepted among fundamentalists.

Porphyry's Antiochus Epiphanes Theory.—The now-frequent application of the fourth kingdom of Dan. 2 and 7 to the Hellenistic period[DPH1], and thus of the little horn of Dan. 7 to Antiochus Epiphanes, has generally been traced back to Porphyry (A.D., 233–c. 304), a Neoplatonist and a defender of paganism. Alarmed at the onward spread of Christianity, and sensing the key position occupied by prophecy in early Christian thinking, Porphyry attempted to parry the force of Daniel's prophecy by contending that the book was not a prophecy written by Daniel in the 6th century B.C., but a deceptive historical sketch, penned by a later writer in the time of the Maccabees. In other words, Porphyry charged that the book was fabricated after the historical events had taken place, but was couched in the future tense as if a prediction.

This counterinterpretation was not accepted by the Christians of the West, but was confined to a few in the Near East. Porphyry's theory mostly lay dormant until post-Reformation times, when it was brought out of its obscurity by Hugh Broughton (1549–1612) of England. But it has since been widely used (doubtless without knowledge of its

origin and its real objective), in the Old World and the New, to counter the Historical School of interpretation, which interprets the little horn of Dan. 7 to be the historical papacy coming up among the ten divisions of the fourth, or Roman, power and flourishing during the Middle Ages. This Antiochus Epiphanes theory has now become widespread among modernists, and is found in most critical commentaries.

New World Interpretation Often Clearer.—The migrants to the New World brought with them the standard interpretation of Daniel common among 17th-century Protestants of Great Britain and the Continent. From the time of their arrival in America, prophecy held a prominent place in the thinking of the colonists. Expositors came from all walks of life. The first American commentary on Daniel, published in 1644, was by Ephraim Huit, *The Whole Prophecie of Daniel Explained*. Physical separation from Old World scenes and associations resulted in an independent line of exposition, often clearer than some interpretations in Old World circles because Preterism, Rationalism, etc., had not yet made inroads in America.

Nineteenth-Century Awakening.—At a time when postmillennialism prevailed in the churches and Preterism was capturing critical scholarship, yet before Futurism developed, historicist premillennialism flourished.

Historical prophetic interpretation has been ascendant in three periods—first in the early Christian centuries, then in the Reformation and post-Reformation periods, and finally in the early 19th century. That is the over-all background of the 19th-century Old World advent awakening and New World advent movement, in which many independent expositors pioneered the way in paralleling interpretations.

Ancestry of Our Interpretation.—The interpretations of 25 centuries show that our role, as Seventh-day Adventists, is that of recoverers and continuators of honored and orthodox prophetic expositions of the centuries, cumulatively developed and now restored, re-emphasized, and perfected in the light of these latter times. Our special emphasis today is appropriately, and logically, on those last-day segments of the prophecies not heretofore perceived or stressed. In the past the time had not yet come for their fulfillment, and consequent recognition, application, and emphasis.

Basic Interpretations Received From Others.—All of our present-day basic interpretations, including all great outline prophecies (such as the 1844 terminus of the 2300 years of Dan. 8:14, and their synchronous beginning with the 70 weeks of Dan. 9:25), can consequently be traced back to former expositors of note. Thus we as Seventh-day Adventists simply stand in the line of the sound expositors of the years, gratefully recognizing our indebtedness to the noble pathfinders. We are the inheritors of the prophetic truths of past expositors and the special heralds of last-day fulfillments.

With such a background of understanding before us we are now prepared to follow the progressive and specific developments in the interpretation of the symbolic metallic man of Dan. 2; the four beasts, ten horns and little horn of the fourth beast, and the 31/2-time prophecy of Dan. 7; the ram and he-goat and their respective horns, and the longest time prophecy of Daniel, in ch. 8; the 70 weeks unto Messiah the Prince of Dan. 9; and the paralleling literal prophecy of the 11th and 12th chapters of the book of Daniel.

Progressive Coverage in Daniel's Outlines.—One point should be borne in mind as we proceed. The prophecies of Daniel are unique in the Old Testament. The writings of former prophets did not provide a chronology of future events. Sometimes the first and second advents were seemingly presented together, without indicating the time that was

to intervene between them and without differentiating between the spiritual triumphs of the church here and now, and the glories of the eternal kingdom of God in the earth made new.

On the other hand, the outline prophecies of Daniel give the chronological sequence and continuity of the divine plan of the ages. They span the centuries in unbroken progression from the time of Daniel onward to the establishment of the kingdom of God and the earth made new. They give the kingdom setting for the mighty redemptive plan of God as realized in the first and second advents of Christ. This inspired timetable of the centuries reveals the time of the first advent and of the “time of the end” preceding the second advent. Daniel’s prophecies clearly reveal the determining hand of God in history and His control of world affairs. They present the divine philosophy and the significance of history. They unfold God’s great plan of redemption in operation, with the cataclysmic end of the age in the offing. They set forth the sole hope of the world as well, and the glorious outcome.

That which was revealed to Daniel in vision may be likened to a silent motion picture—as Daniel saw action in continuity, such as the hurtling stone smashing the metallic image of Dan. 2, grinding its component parts to powder and becoming a mountain that fills the whole earth forever. In other instances his visions might be likened to a talking picture, or telecast, as Daniel hears the words of blasphemy spoken by the little horn of Dan. 7, or sees the succession of beast symbols, the sprouting of the ten horns, the uprooting of three, and the upspringing of the little horn, which is followed by the awesome scenes of judgment. Thus Daniel provides a new type of prophecy—the outline prophecy and its contingent time periods. We now take up this series of prophetic portrayals by Daniel, as their component features came to be understood by expositors across the centuries.

II. General Unanimity on Daniel 2 Through the Centuries

Jews Identify Rome as Fourth Power.—Through the centuries Dan. 2 has commonly been regarded as the A B C of the great outline prophecies. The first to be expounded, it was considered foundational to Daniel’s four subsequent prophecies. The Jews, about the beginning of the Christian Era, were its first expositors. They believed that it portrayed the sequence of four world powers from Daniel’s day onward, followed by the Messianic kingdom. From Daniel’s statements (chs. 2:38, 39; 5:28; 8:20–22) they rightly concluded that the first was Babylon, the second the Medo-Persian Empire, and the third “Grecia,” i.e., the Greco-Macedonian Empire of Alexander and his successors.

At the outset of the Christian Era Flavius Josephus, noted 1st-century Jewish historian-priest and contemporary of the last of the apostles, reiterates the accepted Jewish interpretation of the four empires. To avoid offending Rome, which brooked no rivals, he was quite reticent about naming the “iron” kingdom, which was to be destroyed and superseded by the world-filing one of “stone.” He was even more hesitant about identifying the stone, or Messianic, kingdom, that would bring an end to the Roman Empire. But Jewish Johanan ben Zakkai, likewise of the 1st century A.D., explicitly identified Rome, then in its might, as the fourth empire of prophecy.

The authoritative Talmud, Targums, and Midrash all made Rome the fourth empire in the prophetic series. The Midrash and the Talmud also included the later ecclesiastical phase of Rome. Then Rabbis Eliezer, Saadia, Jephthah ibn Ali, Rashi, Abraham ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Gersonides, Abravanel, Joseph ben David, and particularly Manasseh ben

Israel, spread in time between the 9th and the 17th century, paralleled the Christian writers of those centuries in identifying the four empires of Daniel, with the stone as the Messianic kingdom to come. Several, such as Abraham ibn Ezra, Jephth ibn Ali, and Isaac Abravanel, thought the intermingled iron and clay might be Christianity and Mohammedanism. But the stone kingdom had not yet come, and to them it was obviously not the Christian church, as most Catholics held. Most explicit of all was Manasseh ben Israel, who died in 1657. He established the first Jewish print shop and also served as chief rabbi at Amsterdam. He presented the four empires in the accepted sequence, the two legs as Romanism and Mohammedanism, the ten toes Rome's divisions, with "God's Fifth Monarchy" completing the series.

Early Christians Await Rome's Division.—Among early Christian writers, 2d-century Irenaeus of Gaul, appealing to prophecy to demonstrate the truthfulness of Scripture, taught the same progression of the four kingdoms, with the Roman fourth ending in tenfold partition. To him Christ was the prophesied heaven-descending "stone," which was to smite the image after Rome's breakup. Tertullian at Carthage, of the 3d century, similarly held that, at His second coming, Christ will destroy the secular kingdoms of the quadripartite image, and declared that past fulfillments assured the certainty of future events.

A classic early expositor, 3d-century Hippolytus (d. about 236), bishop of Portus Romanus and writer of a remarkable commentary on Daniel, asserted the four world powers to be Babylonia, Persia, Grecia, and Rome—in which latter kingdom and period he declared his generation to be living. He asserted, further, that the toes of iron and clay, "which are to be," were yet future in his day, and expounded the smiting stone to be Christ, "who comes from heaven and brings judgment on the world."

Fourth-century Eusebius Pamphili, bishop of Caesarea and famed "father of ecclesiastical history," likewise named the commonly accepted four empires, and added that "after these four, the kingdom of God was presented as a stone that destroyed the whole image" by divine interposition. Even the contemporary Aphrahat, the Persian sage, taught the same, with the smiting stone as Christ's yet future and eternal kingdom.

Division Recognized When Under Way.—Then, as Rome was in process of breaking up, 5th-century Sulpicius Severus, of Aquitaine, became the herald of a new fulfillment—that the clay was already being mingled with the iron in his day. "This, too, has been fulfilled," he declared. The illustrious doctor of the Latin church, Jerome (c. 340–420), likewise taught the progressive partitioning of the Roman Empire into fragments as already "most manifestly acknowledged" in his day, and names the early barbaric dividers of Rome. The Greek exegete, Theodoret (c. 386–457), bishop of Cyrrhus in the 5th century, similarly asserted Rome's iron strength to be already weakened by the admixture of clay, with the eternal stone (Christ) destined to destroy the nations at the second advent.

Augustine Applies Stone Mountain to Church.—Then came Augustine misguidedly asserting the prophesied eternal reign of Christ to be the present reign of the Roman Church, which he believed was in definite process of becoming a world-filing mountain in his day.

Pre-Reformation Interpreters Make Stone Future.—Centuries passed. Then Joachim of Floris (d. 1202), outstanding medieval expositor, took up the exposition of Dan. 2 again, in somewhat tangled form. The four empires are (1) the Chaldean and

Median and Persian, (2) the Macedonian, (3) the Roman, (4) and the Saracen, with the earth-filling stone yet future. Soon John Wyclif, Oxford professor and “the Morning Star of the Reformation,” in the 14th century, likewise said the “four monarchies” of Dan. 2 clearly involve Assyria-Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia, and Rome. And Walter Brute, contemporary Lollard scholar, declared the “feet of the image” of iron and clay betokened the broken “empire of Rome,” which “yet endureth,” with the stone as Christ’s coming kingdom.

Reformers Virtually Unanimous on Standard Exposition.—When the 16th-century Reformation dawned, dynamic Martin Luther, after presenting the standard progression of the four empires—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome—asserted, “In this the whole world agrees.” He also declared that the stone is the coming kingdom of God. He was supported in this position by Melancthon, also by Virgil Solis, Selnecker, and Oecolampadius. In Switzerland Tobias Stimmer, and in Britain George Joye, Hugh Latimer, Thomas Becon, and Thomas Brightman—all of the 16th century—taught similar positions as the commonly accepted platform of the Reformers.

Counter Reformation Denies Rome Has Fallen.—The pressure of the unanimous charge of all Protestant groups, that the Roman Church was the prophesied Antichrist, was keenly felt by the papacy, and resulted in counterinterpretations of prophecy during and following the Counter Reformation. Concerning Dan. 2, Cardinal Bellarmine (d. 1621), ablest of the Jesuit controversialists, seeking to divert the application away from the Roman Church, contended that Antichrist could not come until the division of the Roman Empire had taken place according to prophetic demand.

This inspired specification, he insisted, had not yet taken place. He argued that the two legs of the metallic colossus represented Eastern and Western Rome; that when Western Rome went down, the Eastern leg still stood. And when the Eastern Empire collapsed in 1453, the Western leg had by that time been restored in the form of the Holy Roman Empire—hence Rome had always had one leg on which to stand. And Rome must be broken up before Antichrist could appear. So, he insisted, the papacy is not the Antichrist.

Post-Reformation Expositors Place Stone in Future.—Such formulas of the Anglican Church as *A Short Catechisme*, authorized by Edward VI in 1553, declared the stone kingdom to be yet future. Calvin, however, still leaned to the concept of the stone as the churchly spiritual kingdom, which was to break up all earthly kingdoms. This explains his oppressive attitudes.

In post-Reformation times, following the learned Joseph Mede, who died in 1638, arose John Tillinghast, Independent rector; Thomas Beverley, Independent minister; William Sherwin; Pierre Jurieu, French Huguenot; Sir Isaac Newton; Thomas Newton, Anglican bishop; Heinrich Horch; Jean de la Fléchère, Swiss associate of Wesley; Hans Wood, Irish layman; John Willison, Scottish divine; James Bicheno, English dissenter; and Christian G. Thube, German pastor, all of whom taught the sequence of Babylonia, Persia, Grecia, and Rome, which was then commonly regarded as unassailable. The feet and toes were the nations into which Rome was divided. And the stone was most often declared to be the coming kingdom of Christ.

Colonial Americans Support Standard Views.—Colonial and early national American writers of the 17th and 18th centuries paralleled the Old World positions. Ephraim Huit, of Connecticut, first New World systematic expounder of Daniel (1644),

held to the standard four empires, and the stone as the coming kingdom of Christ, noting the admixture of clay and iron in the feet as the mixture of the Church of Rome with the temporal states of Europe. At the same time learned Thomas Parker, of Massachusetts, insisted that the stone kingdom will not be established until Christ's second advent, which will bring about the breakup of kingdoms and the downfall of Antichrist. And Samuel Hutchinson, Bostonian layman, declared the stone "not yet" cut out of the mountain.

Increase Mather, prolific writer on prophecy and president of Harvard, who died in 1723, named the four monarchies and specified the divisions, likewise asserting the stone is not yet the world-filling mountain. Cotton Mather, his son, Congregational theologian, stated the same. And Nicholas Noyes, Salem pastor, held the metallic image to be standing on its "last Leggs," as if it had received a shattering blow from the "Stone." Ezekiel Cheever, a contemporary New England schoolmaster, also held that Christ's kingdom will not be established until after the four monarchies pass.

Benjamin Gale, Connecticut physician, asserted the feet and toes section of the image to be the last form of Roman tyranny, in which the "civil and ecclesiastical powers are united and blended." Samuel Osgood, Postmaster General from 1789 to 1791, held the period of the feet to be fast expiring, with the stone representing the second advent. Joshua Spalding, Salem premillennialist, likewise taught the standard four empires, with the stone smiting the image at the second advent. And finally, David Austin, former Presbyterian pastor, holding the clay and iron to represent state power and church power, declared their destruction will be accomplished through the predicted smiting by the stone.

Nineteenth Century Presents Impressive Picture.—In the 19th century, Manuel Lacunza, Chilean Jesuit priest and writer, ended the prophecy of the metallic image with the ten toes of the iron legs as the Roman-Gothic professedly Christian kingdoms of Western Europe, and the stone as Christ's kingdom. He stressed the continued division, despite royal intermarriages, and declared that the medieval church was not the stone kingdom.

In Great Britain there were many prominent expositors, comprising Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and other nonconformists, who taught in similar vein between 1805 and 1822, stressing the same four world powers and the iron-clay feet and toes of divided Europe—not a few of the expositors naming them—and the stone as Christ's, God's, or the Messiah's coming kingdom. In addition, Bishop Daniel Wilson of India, François Samuel Robert Louis Gaussen of Switzerland, and J. H. Richter of Germany taught in like manner.

Nineteenth-Century Americans Almost Unanimous.—Not merely the Millerites, but the bulk of the expositors of Daniel in the United States writing between 1798 and 1844, largely agreed that the four metallic parts of the prophetic image symbolized Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Grecia, and Rome, with the feet and toes of commingled iron and clay as the divided nations of Europe. Some went so far as to say that the intermingling likewise represented the union of churchcraft and statecraft. And these all declared that the stone that is to shatter the nations and fill the earth is the coming kingdom of Christ.

The same was true of the hundreds of Millerite heralds, who wrote and preached widely in the early 1840's. The commonly accepted Millerite positions on prophecy were

reached largely through a series of some 18 general conferences of the clergymen and other leaders who had espoused the Millerite cause. These were drawn from all religious groups—Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Christians, Dutch Reformed, and others. Here, in conference, they came to conclusions which they then proclaimed to the world through tract, pamphlet, and book, and by their battery of periodicals spread from Maine to Ohio, and from Montreal down to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. These comprised more than 30 national and local, permanent and temporary, journals, with unusually large circulations for the time. And these spoke with virtually one voice, agreeing in all essentials on the great outline prophecies of Daniel, and related time periods.

Chain of Attestants Cover Christian Era.—In summation, Dan. 2 has been interpreted, with considerable unanimity by Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant expositors alike for nearly 2,000 years, as the four world powers from Babylon to Rome. The feet and toes of the prophetic metal man have been recognized as the partitioned Roman Empire, continuing to this day as the modern nations of Western Europe. The chief differences, aside from the variation of the fourth empire as the Hellenistic kingdoms or as Rome, have been (1) that the Jews regard the stone simply as the coming Messianic kingdom; (2) that Roman Catholics hold the stone to be the present Roman Church, in inexorable process of becoming the world-filling mountain; and (3) that most Protestants have interpreted it to be the future kingdom to be set up by Christ at His second coming.

Seventh-day Adventists, therefore, are in accord with the fundamental historic interpretation of Dan. 2—four world powers, Rome divided into ten kingdoms, with all their intermarriages, leagues, and futile alliances, the intermingled clay and iron also involving the intermingling of “statecraft and churchcraft,” with the approaching establishment of the kingdom of God to be accomplished by divine interposition in human affairs through the second coming of Christ, when the period of Antichrist’s allotted reign will eventually be ended.

III. Outline of Daniel 7 Amplifies Prophecy of Chapter 2

As far back as the early church it was held that the prophecy of the four wild-beast symbols of Dan. 7, followed by the establishment of the kingdom of God, simply paralleled, repeated, and amplified the prophetic outline of the four metals of the great prophetic statue of a man and the shattering stone in Dan. 2. Both visions were recognized as God’s portrayal of the rise and fall of nations and the charting of the course of world empires, with most developments recognized as they came to pass.

Reference to the ten kingdoms and the little horn in the Epistle of Barnabas, about A.D. 150, implies realization that the fourth beast was the then existing Roman Empire, with ten kingdoms soon to be carved out of Rome, followed by the uprooting of three horn-kings by the “little king.” And this is followed by allusion to the crooked course of the coming “black one,” or “lawless one,” and his destruction at the second advent and judgment.

Breakup Awaited and Perceived.—Justin Martyr of Samaria, first Ante-Nicene church father, then connected the second advent with the climax of Dan. 7, and alluded to the 3 1/2 times. Irenaeus of Gaul, who died c. 202, declared the Roman fourth kingdom in the great succession would end in a ten-fold partitioning, with the little horn supplanting

three of Rome's ten divisions. Moreover, he identified Paul's Antichristian man of sin with Daniel's little horn.

Time was inevitably foreshortened to those early expositors. To Irenaeus the 31/2 times were 31/2 literal years, appropriate to the life of a single individual. Not until Joachim of Floris, in the 12th century, was the conception of 1260 literal years for these 31/2 times advanced. Tertullian, of Carthage (3d century), added the thought that, according to Paul (in 2 Thess. 2), undivided Rome's continuance delayed Antichrist's appearance, and its breakup into the ten kingdoms would make way for Antichrist, who would ultimately be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's second advent.

At least as early as Hippolytus (c. A.D. 200) the parallel of the corresponding factors of Dan. 2 and 7 was recognized. They are identical in scope, he held, simply with amplification in Dan. 7. Here are his own remarkable words:

"The 'golden head of the image' is identical with the 'lioness,' by which the Babylonians were represented. 'The golden shoulders and the arms of silver' are the same with the 'bear,' by which the Persians and Medes are meant. 'The belly and thighs of brass' are the 'leopard,' by which the Greeks who ruled from Alexander onwards are intended. The 'legs of iron' are the 'dreadful and terrible beast,' by which the Romans who hold the empire now are meant. The 'toes of clay and iron' are the 'ten horns' which are to be. The 'one other little horn springing up in their midst' is the 'antichrist.' The stone that 'smites the image and breaks it in pieces,' and that filled the whole earth, is Christ, who comes from heaven and brings judgment on the world"

(*Fragments From Commentaries*, "On Daniel," fragment 2, [ch. 3](#); [cf.](#) his *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist*).

Living in the time of Rome's dominance, he declared that the ten kingdoms were "yet to rise." A century later, just before the Council of Nicaea, Eusebius of Caesarea reiterated essentially the same position, paralleling Dan. 2 and 7, with the kingdom of God to be introduced by divine interposition at the second advent. To this Cyril of Jerusalem agreed—Daniel's four beasts are the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires, with the Antichrist appearing after Rome's division, and the humbling of three of the horn-divisions following. And in this outline Chrysostom of Constantinople concurred, writing at the close of the 4th century.

Soon Porphyry, attempting to discredit the prophecy of Daniel, injected the idea that the little horn of Dan. 7 was simply Antiochus Epiphanes of the 2d century B.C. Jerome, translator of the Vulgate, and last comprehensive expositor of Daniel's prophecies before the Dark Ages, wrote, in the 5th century, to offset Porphyry's positions, and identified the beasts of Dan. 7 with the metals of Dan. 2. He likewise named a number of the divisions of Rome—the Vandals, Saxons, Burgundians, Alamanni, etc. He declared the little horn to be, not Antiochus, but the coming Antichrist. The judgment and the advent would follow the little horn's reign, which he still thought would simply cover 31/2 literal years. Theodoret, Greek theologian, added that Daniel's little horn of the fourth, or Roman, beast is the same as Paul's "son of perdition."

Marked Advances Under Joachim and Eberhard.—Medieval prophetic interpretation was marked by no advances. The 7th-century work, *Sargis d'Aberga*, refers to the four beasts as the four kingdoms, followed by the ten horn-divisions, with the little horn as the "false Messiah." The earliest extant drawings preserving the four symbolic beasts were by Beatus, 8th-century Spanish monk. Britain's Venerable Bede, likewise of the 8th century, alluded to these four principal kingdoms, which he named. But to him the 31/2 times were similarly literal years.

A Benedictine monk, Berengaud, late in the 9th century, attempted to give the geographical location of certain of the horns as historical divisions of Rome, such as the

Vandals in Spain, the Goths in Germany, and the Huns in Pannonia. An exposition of Daniel mistakenly attributed to Thomas Aquinas, of the 13th century, cited Jerome's standard exposition of the four empires, with ten horns as future kings in the time of Antichrist, who was to rule 3 1/2 years. And Peter Comestor (d. about 1178), schoolman, portrayed the course of Babylon, Persia, Grecia, and Rome, the ten divisions of the Roman kingdom, and the little horn as Antichrist springing out of the tribe of Dan.

But with Joachim of Floris, most noted expositor of the Middle Ages, the restoration of the historical view of prophecy to its rightful place began. Though he alluded to Dan. 7, his greatest contribution was the extension of the year-day principle to the 1260 days of Revelation. These he equated with the 42 months of Rev. 11:2 and the 3 1/2 times of Dan. 7, declaring, "a day without doubt being accepted for a year." His 13th-century followers, such as Arnold of Villanova and Pierre Jean d'Olivier, then applied this year-day principle to the 1290 and 1335 days.

The notable Waldensian *Treatise on Antichrist* stressed the papal church's fulfillment of Daniel's, Paul's, and John's prophetic predictions in this comprehensive statement: "Iniquity thus qualified together with all the Ministers thereof great and small, together with all them that follow them with an evil heart, and blindfold; such a Congregation comprised together, is that which is called Antichrist or Babylon or the fourth Beast, or the Whore, or the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition" (trans. in Samuel Morland, *The History of the Evangelical Churches of the Valleys of Piemont*, pp. 143, 158, 159).

But the first to declare the little horn of Dan. 7 to be the historical papacy—an Antichristian system, not an individual—was Eberhard II, archbishop of Salzburg, in Austria, at the Council of Regensburg in 1240. The significance of his declaration can scarcely be overstated. This postulate became the position of Wyclif, Luther, Cranmer, and Knox, and of practically all Reformation and post-Reformation Protestant expositors on the Continent, in Great Britain, and then in North America.

Jewish Expositor Identifies Papal Horn.—Among medieval Jewish expositors Jephth ibn Ali, of the 10th century, thought the ten horns were Roman, but surmised that the little horn was Mohammedanism. On the contrary, Don Isaac Abravanel (1437–1508), brilliant minister of finance under Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, after setting forth Rome as the fourth world power of Dan. 7, declared of the little horn: "Therefore I have come to the inner conclusion that the little horn was the rule of the pope" (*Wells of Salvation*, well 8, palm tree 5).

Reformation Positions Increasingly Accurate.—John Wyclif, pre-Reformation Oxford professor, who died in 1384, emphasized the little horn as the papacy, arising among the ten horn-kingdoms. He explicitly stated, "For so our clergy foresee the lord Pope." Luther and Melancthon were not so clear as to whether the little horn of Dan. 7 was papal Rome or Mohammedanism. But Virgil Solis of Nürnberg (d. about 1567) definitely put forth the papacy as the triple-crowned beast in his unique illustrated commentary.

Then follows a whole succession of expositors in Germany and Switzerland with similar views, covering the second half of the 16th century. The same was true in Britain, from Tyndale in 1529 onward. Identification of the papacy as the little horn was now virtually unanimous among Protestants. Knox's first sermon, in 1547, was a notable Reformation exposition of Dan. 7, in which he named the four empires. This statement follows:

“In the destruction whereof, rose up that last Beast, which he [Knox] affirmed to be the Romane Church; for to none other power that ever hath yet beene, do all the notes that God hath shewed to the Prophet appertain”

(John Knox, *The Historie of the Reformatioun of Religioun Within the Realm of Scotland*).

During this period the listing of the ten horns as constituting the European nations was common. Joye (d. 1553) gives the standard listing of the empires with the Roman Empire, as the fourth division, dispersed and decayed into “Germanye, Englande, Spayne, France,” etc. There are increasingly accurate attempts to find the time placement of the 1260 years—Aretius of Bern first put it as from 312 to 1572, and Brocardo of Italy as from 313 to 1573. Then others place it from 412 to 1672, or from 441 to 1701, with Bishop John Jewel of England suggesting possibly from Justinian in the 6th century.

Counter- and Post-Reformation Conflicts.—Then the Counter Reformation injected counterinterpretations, projected by the Jesuits Francisco Ribera (d. 1591) and Luis de Alcazar (d. 1613), seeking to restrict Antichrist to a single individual instead of a system, dominant for 1260 literal days instead of 1260 years. Ribera made Antichrist a future infidel Jew, not a Christian, to reign in Jerusalem, not in Rome. His was the main Roman Catholic counterattack, and became the standard Catholic position. But while Ribera thrust Antichrist into the future, Alcazar pushed him back into the past, making him a former pagan Roman emperor. In his endeavor Ribera was strongly supported by Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (d. 1621), who attacked the year-day principle and restricted Daniel’s little horn to a single Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes—the theory advanced by the pagan critic Porphyry more than 1,000 years earlier.

In post-Reformation times numerous expositors appeared in Great Britain, Germany, France, and Switzerland between 1603 and 1797. The Historical School position on Dan. 7—the four empires, the ten divisions of Rome, the papacy as the little horn, with increasingly accurate placement of the 1260 years—was predominant. And these exegetes included some of the most illustrious men of the time—bishops, kings, university professors, scientists, and theologians. To most of these, the papacy was unquestionably the little horn.

Drue Cressener’s remarkable anticipation, in 1689, of the ending of the 1260 years about a century later, or “shortly before 1800,” is to be noted. He was the first clearly to date the 1260 years from Justinian, and this precisely a hundred years (1689) before the French Revolution broke out in 1789. This was his anticipation:

“The first appearance of the Beast was at *Justinians* recovery of the *Western* Empire, from which time to about the year 1800 will be about 1260 years”

(*The Judgments of God Upon the Roman Catholick Church*, p. 209).

Even more accurate is a supplemental expression occurring a few pages farther on: “For if the first time of the Beast was at *Justinians* recovery of the City of *Rome*, then must not it end till a little before the year 1800.”

Contemporary Recognition of Period’s Close.—The supplanting of the papal government, with the banishment of Pope Pius VI from Rome in February, 1798 (the entrance of the French marshal Berthier into Rome on the 10th, the dethronement of Pius on the 15th, and the conveyance of the aged pope out of the city on the 20th), was hailed by prophetic interpreters on both sides of the Atlantic as the obvious termination of the 1260 years. It was recognized and proclaimed by various writers as another epochal advance in interpretation.

New England Expositors Support Old World Positions.—Paralleling the Old World post-Reformation expositors, a stalwart line of interpreters of Dan. 7 appeared in

New England, extending from Puritan John Cotton in 1639, on to premillennialist Joshua Spalding in 1796—a number of prominent writers. These comprised Presbyterians, Baptists, and other nonconformists. While the majority were clergymen, several were presidents of colleges—Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and others—from Increase Mather on to Timothy Dwight, in the early years of the 19th century. There were also governors, a chief justice of Massachusetts, a Postmaster General, and a Secretary of State, as well as physicians, historians, legislators, educators, authors, and editors.

Roger Williams' petition to the British Parliament for protection against religious persecution was based on the prophetic outline of Dan. 7. The high-water mark in Colonial exposition was doubtless in the time of Increase Mather (d. 1723), who wrote: "It was reveal'd to the Prophet Daniel, that there should be Four great Monarchys on the Earth successively; First, the Babylonish, after that the Persian, then the Grecian, and lastly the Roman: And that this should be divided into Ten Kingdoms; and that among them there should spring up an Horn (a King) which should be diverse from the other Kings, viz. Antichrist: All this has been fulfilled. But then 'tis foretold that this Horn should make War with the Saints and prevail over them, and continue for a Time, and Times, and the dividing of Time, and after that be destroyed, and then shall be given to CHRIST, Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, (Dan. 7:14) that ALL People, Nations and Languages should fear Him" (*Discourse Concerning Faith and Fervency in Prayer*, p. 19).

These men designated the papacy, or the successive bishops of Rome and their followers, as the little horn upspringing among the divisions of Rome, which are frequently named. For instance, William Burnet (d. 1729) lists them as the Visigoths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Huns, Alans, Suevians, Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Lombards, with the three horns plucked up being the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Lombards. And in the fixing of the time feature, the 3 1/2 times, or 1260 years, range between Cotton's dating of 395–1655 on to Joseph Lathrop's 606–1866. So there was virtually a parity with Old World interpretation of the same period.

Old World Heralds Recognize 1260 Years as Fulfilled.—Still more pronounced and uniform was identification of the papacy as the little horn by many noted Old World expositors of the early 19th-century advent awakening, ranging in time between William Hales (1803) and E. B. Elliott (1844). They included Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Anglicans in Britain, and Lutherans and others on the Continent, men of high training and leadership, bishops, deans, vicars, theologians, pastors, professors, editors, barristers, architects, commentators, chronologists, historians, and a member of Parliament.

The standard Historicist, or Historical School, exposition for Dan. 7 was now regarded as established. And by the majority the 1260 year-days were then believed to be historically past—extending from the time of Justinian to the French Revolution. More than any other single dating, 533–1793 was cited by this group. There were also attempts to determine the relationship of the 1290 and 1335 years to the already accomplished 1260 years. This led not a few to add the extra 30 years of the 1290 (1260+30=1290), and the 45 more of the 1335 years (1290+45=1335), in their quest for the ending of the 1335 years.

Thus by many the end of this last period was placed around 1866, 1867, or 1868. And with such, a "continuationist" position relative to the 1260 years developed: that is, although the initial application was perhaps from 533 to 1793, it came to be held that a secondary application might well be from 606 (under Emperor Phocas) to 1866, thus producing uncertainty.

It was not until this advent awakening that Ribera's Roman Catholic Counter Reformation Futurist theory of Antichrist was first accepted among Protestants—that he would be an individual tyrant; would reign in Jerusalem, not in Rome; would appear at the end of the age, not span the Middle Ages; would dominate for 3 1/2 literal years, or 1260 literal days, not for a period of more than 1000 years. First adopted by Samuel Roffey Maitland of England, this theory was embraced by James Todd and William Burgh, both of Dublin. From them and from the Catholic, Lacunza, Futurism spread slowly among some pre-millennialists in the Old World, and thence to the New, until it has now become the generally accepted fundamentalist position! But the area of special interest and study in the field of prophecy had now shifted from Dan. 7, with its final judgment scenes, over to Dan. 8, to be surveyed in Section IV.

Remarkable American Unity Except on Dating.—A survey of 49 published expositions of Dan. 7 by non-Millerite American interpreters of a dozen denominations between 1800 and 1844 shows distribution by States as follows: New York, 10; Massachusetts, 8; Pennsylvania, 7; Connecticut, 6; New Hampshire, Ohio, and Virginia, 3 each; New Jersey and Tennessee, 2 each; and Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, North Carolina, and South Carolina, 1 each. There were also 1 from Canada and 1 from Mexico.

These were nearly unanimous in the exposition of the four beasts of Dan. 7 (identical with the four world powers of Dan. 2), also of the ten horns (ten divisions of the Roman fourth empire), and of the little horn (the papacy). There was the usual variation over the time placement of the 1260 years. Sixteen expositors dated them from Justinian to the French Revolution, that is, beginning them between 529 and 538, and ending the period between 1789 and 1798. Fourteen selected 606 (from Phocas) to 1866. Eight figured back 1260 years from 1847, so as to end the period with the 2300 years, which these particular expositors placed from 453 B.C. to A.D. 1847.

The Millerite leaders, between 1831 and 1844, though several hundred strong, held practically to a man to the standard outline of the four world powers from Babylon to Rome, followed by ten European kingdoms of divided Western Rome. There was not a dissenting voice over identifying the little horn as the papacy. Moreover, this large group of ministerial heralds, and their associated laymen lecturers, were unanimous in assigning 538 and 1798 as the beginning and ending dates of the 1260 years.

The Seventh-day exposition of Dan. 7 may be seen as an impressive heritage from our spiritual ancestors, bequeathed through two thousand years of progressive exposition. Seventh-day are thus conspicuously orthodox in their interpretation of this chapter, with the attested support of the reverent scholarship of the centuries behind them.

IV. Daniel 8—Full Understanding in “Time of the End”

Jews First Apply Year-Day Principle to 2300 Years.—Because of the special significance of Dan. 8 to Seventh-day Adventists, this chapter will be traced in greater detail. Daniel, writing under inspiration, indicated that the prophecy of the 2300 days begins with the Medo-Persian Empire in the East, as symbolized by the “ram,” followed by Grecia from the West, as the “goat,” with its first king indicated by the notable horn (Dan. 8:20, 21). There is a tradition that about 332 B.C., in the transition hour from Medo-Persian to Grecian domination, Jaddua, the high priest, in his colorful robes of office, interpreted this prophecy to Alexander the Great when he came to Jerusalem to make demands of the Jews. This is Josephus' record:

“And, when the book of Daniel was shown to him [Alexander], in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he [Alexander] believed himself to be the one indicated; and in his joy he dismissed the multitude for the time being, but on the following day he summoned them again and told them to ask for any gifts which they might desire. When the high priest [Jaddua] asked that they might observe their country’s laws and in the seventh year be exempt from tribute, he granted all this. Then they begged that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media also to have their own laws, and he gladly promised to do as they asked” (*Antiquities* xi. 8. 5).

But the “exceeding great” horn, that was to spring up later, was considered by Josephus to be Antiochus Epiphanes. Later Jews, however, as early as Nahawendi of Persia, in the 9th century, regarded the 2300 “days” to be years, dated from the destruction of Shiloh, in 942 B.C. Tenth-century Jepheth ibn Ali, of Palestine, considered the great horn, which casts truth to the ground, to be Mohammedanism, and regarded the 2300 “days” as years, but with the 2300 evening-mornings taken as 1150 whole year-days. Saadia, of Babylon, likewise in the same century, interpreted the 2300 as 1150 years. But the celebrated Rashi of France, and other Jewish scholars, regarded the 2300 prophetic “days” as full years, though beginning the period at different dates—as from Israel going into Egypt, or the erection of the first Temple.

Nahmanides, noted 13th-century Spanish physician, dated the 2300 years from the reign of David; Rashbaz, another physician (15th century), dated them from the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, from about 450 B.C. to A.D. 1850. But the great Spanish expositor Isaac Abravanel interpreted the 2300 years as the duration of exile under Rome, ending them, significantly, in the “far-off days” at the “time of the end.”

Early Christian Writer’s Constricted View.—Among early Christian writers Clement of Alexandria, in common with all early church expositors who wrote on the longer time periods of Daniel, regarded the 2300 “days” as simply a period of six years and four months, probably in the time of Nero, or later. Julius Africanus suggested that they might be months, totaling about 185 years, from the capture of Jerusalem to the 20th year of Artaxerxes. But in this he stood alone. Irenaeus of Gaul, his contemporary, regarded the exceeding great horn, and its related time period, as the reign of Antichrist. Ephraim the Syrian (c. 306–373), like Hippolytus, restricted this horn to Antiochus. And Polychronius (c. 374–430), likewise in Syria and following Porphyry, equated Daniel’s 3 1/2 times with the 2300 literal evening-mornings, which he considered to be 1150 whole days. Some equated the little horn with Antiochus and Antichrist.

Thirteenth-Century Expositors Apply Year-Day.—Jerome was the standard on Daniel during the medieval centuries. Then we come to the pseudo Thomas Aquinas, who, like the earlier Ephraim and Polychronius, saw in the little horn of Dan. 8, Antiochus, with the 2300 “days” as the time of his devastation of Jerusalem, but he also made the same horn the Antichrist. On the other hand, the noted Joachim of Floris, at the close of the 12th century, believed Antiochus the type of this Antichrist horn. And in the 13th century, in the treatise called *De Semine Scripturarum*, attributed to a monk of Bamberg, occurs the first Christian interpretation of the 2300 days of 23 centuries (from the time of Daniel, thus extending to the 16th century). In 1292 the Spanish physician Arnold of Villanova wrote an interpretation, or commentary, on *De Semine*. He expressly dated the 2300 years, on the year-day principle, from Daniel to the second advent, or the “evening” of the world:

“When he says ‘two thousand three hundred days’ it must be said that by days he understands years. This is clear through the explanation of the angel when he says that in the end the vision will be fulfilled, from which he gives it to be understood by clear expression that in that vision by days are understood years.”

This he reiterated in a later treatise in 1305. Olivi, at the close of the 13th century, likewise a Joachimite, made the 2300 to be either literal days, during the Antiochus’ treading Jerusalem underfoot, or years, from Antiochus to about A.D. 2000. Ubertino of Casale (b. 1259) gave the same dating, from Antiochus to A.D. 2000.

Cusa Ends 2300 Years in 18th Century.—Next came Nicholas Krebs of Cuba (c. 1400–1464), Catholic cardinal, scholar, philosopher, who not only popularized the application of the year-day prophetic time measurement to the 2300 years, but in 1440 gave to them a more definite starting point. He championed the authority of councils over that of the pope, pressed for reform of ecclesiastical abuses, exposed the forgery of the Donation of Constantine, and in part anticipated by a century the Copernican theory of the earth’s motion. In his *Conjectures Concerning the Last Days* (1452), he declared that glimpses of the future are revealed through prophecy. He contended that the 2300 years extend from the time of Daniel’s vision of ch. 8, in the first year of Persia, to Christ’s coming to judgment and the consuming of sin at His second advent, possibly 1700–1750. Here are his exact words, translated from the Latin:

“In the same way it was opened up to Daniel in what way the last curse would be after the sanctuary shall be cleansed and the vision fulfilled; and this after year 2300 days from the hour of the going forth of the word. Whence in the third year of king Belshazzar this revelation was made to him, in the first year of Cyrus the king who, according to Jerome, Africanus, and Josephus, lived about 559 years before Christ, then it is established that the resurrection of the church according to the predicted number by resolving a day into a year, according to the unfolding made to the prophet Ezekiel, [will be] 1700 after Christ and before 1750; which agrees with what had been set forth.”

Retrogression in Reformation Century.—Apparently only a few expositors in the Reformation century touched on Dan. 8. Martin Luther, after identifying the ram as the Medo-Persian Empire and the goat as Grecia under Alexander (to be followed by a four-part division), said the “exceeding great” horn seemed to be Antiochus, a type of the papal Antichrist, in his persecution of the Jews for 2300 literal days, or some six years and three months. Melancthon practically repeats Luther’s position. John Napier, Scottish expositor, in the early 17th century also regarded the 2300 as literal days.

Progress Marked After Reformation.—In the Reformation period, and after, at least 21 expositors, from George Downham (d. 1634), English theologian, on through to Edward King, barrister (writing about 1798), expounded Dan. 8 and regarded the number 2300 as involving years. Downham, it may be noted, considered the exceeding great horn to be the papacy, which takes away the “daily,” and thought this period reached to the Reformation. John Tillingham (d. 1655) ended the 2300 years, along with the 1335 years, in 1701, at the beginning of Christ’s anticipated personal coming and the reign of the saints during the 1000 years. He started the 2300 years with the first year of Cyrus, at the beginning of Persia, and extended them to the second advent and the concurrent overthrow of the beast. And, more significantly, he included the 70 weeks within the 2300 years.

“This seventy weeks is a lesser Epock comprehended within the greater of two thousand and three hundred years, consisting of four hundred and ninety dayes; for seventy weeks being reduced into dayes, amount to the aforesaid number, which according to the Prophetical way of speaking is so many years, viz. four hundred and ninety years”

(*Knowledge of the Times*, pp. 152, 153).

William Sherwin extended the 2300 years from the captivity of Babylon to the “blessed time,” ending them about 1700, terminating them jointly with the 1335 years. Thomas Beverly, toward the close of the 17th century, extended the 2300 years from Persia to a number of related events—to the “cleansing of the sanctuary, at the new Jerusalem, and the breaking of Antichrist” by the stone of the prophet Daniel saw cut out of the mountain without hands.

An anonymous pamphlet of 1699 entitled *The Mysteries of God Finished* calculated the 2300 years from the first year of the Medo-Persian Empire to the time of the “Churches Deliverance,” that is, about 1699. William Lowth (1660–1732) terminated the 2300 years with the destruction of Antichrist. About the same time William Whiston ended the 2300 years in 1716. Theodore Crinsoz de Bionens, Swiss Protestant theologian, anticipated the close of the treading down of the church in 1745. Bishop Thomas Newton, of Bristol, England, simply put the terminus of the 2300 years as “still future.” De la Fléchère, associate of Wesley, believed they would end in his or the next generation, possibly about 1770. “R. M.” (1787) dated them as possibly from 558 B.C. to A.D. 1742. John Purves, Scottish pastor, put their close in 1766.

Heinrich Horch (1652–1729), Reformed theologian, placed the 2300 years from Cyrus to the destruction of Antichrist and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom, adding that the 2300 years embrace all other prophetic time periods. Georg Hermann Giblehr, German Pietist pastor, around 1700 anticipated the judgment at the 2300 years’ end, and the annotated Berlenburg Bible, before 1743, stated that this period reaches to the establishment of Christ’s kingdom, and connected the 70 weeks therewith.

Petri—Joint Beginning for 70 Weeks and 2300 Days.—German Reformed pastor Johann P. Petri (1718–1792), who was ministering near Frankfurt am Main, was the first to begin the 70 weeks of years and the 2300 years synchronously. The 70 weeks were the key, he maintained, that unlocked the timing and terminus of the 2300 years. And Christ’s millennial reign begins with the second advent at their close. Here are his words as recorded in two treatises:

“The angel showed the thirtieth year of Christ or the 483d year of the 70 weeks and therefore the 453d year as the birth of Christ, so that was the correct explanation of the sealed vision of the 2300 days. 453 years of the 2300 had passed at the birth of Christ and the remainder of this number continues from that date to A.D. 1847, as 1847 plus 453 makes 2300”

(*Aufschluss der Zahlen Daniels*, p. 9).

“Since 453 years of the 2300 have elapsed at the time of Christ’s birth, so the remaining will bring us to the year 1847 when the sanctuary will be dedicated. As far as the calendar is correct, so far will the end of the 2300 be correct. The proof here rests not upon shaky Persian or Greek dates, but upon the Word of God” (*Aufschluss der drey Gesichter Daniels*, p. 30).

Hans Wood, of Ireland, near the close of the 18th century, likewise made the 70 weeks the first part of the 2300 years, but began them in 420 B.C. He thus extended the 70 weeks to A.D. 70, and accordingly ended the 2300 years in 1880. Then James Bicheno, dissenting schoolman, allocated them from 481 B.C. to A.D. 1819. And Edward King, barrister, computed the time of the 2300 years as from the full establishment of the “ram” (Medo-Persian Empire) in 538 B.C. to A.D. 1762, or possibly from 525 B.C. to A.D. 1775.

Colonial American Interest Only Moderate.—During the Colonial and early national periods expounders of Dan. 8, who formed the American counterpart of the European post-Reformation expositors, still had their chief interest centered on Dan. 7. But a number of them discussed Dan. 8. Thomas Parker, of Massachusetts, Calvinist pastor, in 1645 was clear on the Persian ram, the Grecian goat, and the great Roman horn,

and noted the wars of the papacy against the “true Worship.” Like certain European writers of his day, he thought that the 2300 evening-mornings stood for “just half so many compleat days, to wit, 1150,” computed on the year-day basis. These he suggested might extend from A.D. 367 to about 1517, or from A.D. 360 to 1510.

Samuel Hutchinson, scholarly layman (1618–1667), believed that the 2300 years had not yet run out. The noted theologian Cotton Mather (1663–1728) held that the 2300 years extend to the New Jerusalem, the fall of mystical Babylon, and the “rest that remains” to the people of God.

Studious Governor William Burnet, of Massachusetts, believing the papacy to be the power that polluted the sanctuary, extended the 2300 years from 555 B.C. to A.D. 1745, with the kingdom of God as nigh at hand. David Imrie’s *Letter* of 1756 attested that he looked for the “great day” to begin somewhere about the year 1794, and dated the 2300 years from the first year of Persia, or 538 B.C. Episcopal rector Richard Clarke, of South Carolina, late in the 18th century considered the 2300 years, when the truth should be trodden down and false religion supported, to be from 538 B.C. to A.D. 1762—to the world’s “midnight” and Babylon’s fall.

Congregational deacon Samuel Gatchel, of Massachusetts, believed the darkening of the sun, in May, 1780, was a sign of the times, and was tied in with the 2300 and the 1335 years and the approaching end of the world.

Congregational theologian Samuel Hopkins in 1793 expounded postmillennialism. He held that the “exceeding great” horn, coming out of one of the Greek divisions, embraced both pagan Rome and the power of Antichrist in the church of Rome. After the destruction of that horn the kingdom of Christ will prevail. Though not sure of the year, he believed that the millennial reign would begin as the 2300 years end, about A.D. 2000. And Postmaster General Samuel Osgood (1748–1813), former member of the Continental Congress, reckoned the 2300 years thus:

“It is most probable that the 2300 days commence with the end of the Persian and the beginning of Alexander’s empire, and shall end when the image [of Daniel 2] shall be broken and scattered as chaff by the wind”

(*Remarks on the Book of Daniel*, p. 63).

In 1795 librarian James Winthrop (1752–1821), of Harvard, terminated the 1335 and 2300 years at the millennium (1866).

Numerous Expositors Fix Upon 1843–1847.—A vastly different picture is presented by expositors for the first half of the 19th century. Interest had now shifted from Dan. 7 over to Dan. 8, and from the former 1260 years of ch. 7 to the approaching terminus of the 2300 years, now regarded by many as a prophetic truth whose time for emphasis had come. The impending close of the 2300 years, and the concurrent events to take place, were therefore the new focal point of interest and study. Forty European expositors, from “J. A. B.” (1810) to Birks (1843), are on record as looking for the end of the 2300 years in 1843, 1844, or 1847, most often beginning the 2300 years along with the 70 weeks of Dan. 9. (An exceptional few writers, notably James H. Frere, began the longer period a century earlier, from Daniel’s time, making it 2400 years instead of 2300, citing then-current editions of the LXX, though others pointed out that the number 2400, mistakenly attributed to the Codex Vaticanus, actually originated in a misprint in one 16th-century printed edition. The Vatican manuscript itself reads 2300.)

The 19th-century emphasis on 1843, 1844, or 1847 begins with two treatises—by “J. A. B.” in England (about the close of 1810), and William C. Davis in North America

(Jan., 1811), heralding the approaching close of the fateful 2300 years in 1843 and 1847 respectively. These pioneering voices soon spread beyond Britain to the Continent, and even to Africa and India. There were, however, conflicting positions over the nature of the closing events—whether a cataclysmic end of the age or the gradual beginning of the millennium—and over the identity of the exceeding great horn of Dan. 8, whether Roman or Mohammedan.

William Hales, following the lead of Hans Wood, began the 2300 years in 420 B.C. and ended them in A.D. 1880. On the other hand, George Stanley Faber terminated the 2300 with the 1260 years, in 1866, believing the great horn to be Mohammedanism. Adam Clarke dated them from the vision of the he-goat, or from 334 B.C. to A.D. 1966. William Cuninghame, of Lainshaw, Presbyterian layman, and Archibald Mason, Reformed Presbyterian minister, both of Scotland, took 457 B.C. as the synchronous beginning of the 70 weeks and the 2300 years, and ended the latter in A.D. 1843. With them a notable group agreed. Various writers advocated this dating in several British religious journals devoted largely to the study of prophecy. Study groups, like the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy and the Albury Park conferences, discussed it. Learned men in Great Britain and on the Continent, representing different religious groups, fixed upon 1843, 1844, or 1847 as the end of the 2300 days. Their differences were slight, and their fundamental unity was remarkable.

American Expositors on the 2300 Years.—Among the pre- or non-Millerite expositors between 1800 and 1844 were many well-educated and prominent men. Many were pastors of large city churches. Many of them had a master's degree, and some had a doctor's degree. Several held the highest posts afforded in their respective denominations, such as Dr. Joshua L. Wilson, of Cincinnati, sometime moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly; John P. K. Henshaw, of Rhode Island, Protestant Episcopal bishop; and Alexander Campbell, of Virginia, founder of the Disciples of Christ. Several were college presidents, as Timothy Dwight of Yale, Eliphalet Nott of Union College (Schenectady), and George Junkin of Miami University (Oxford, Ohio). Two, Elias Burdick and Robert Scott, were physicians; one, John Bacon, was a judge; and one, Elias Boudinot, a Congressman and Director of the Mint.

Of the few religious journals then published, several dealt with prophecy, such as the Boston edition of the *Christian Observer* and the *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*. These journals represented the Anglican, Presbyterian, Disciple, and Christian Connection faiths, and one was interdenominational. These editorial molders of public thought included Alexander Campbell of the *Millennial Harbinger* and Elias Smith of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*.

Most of those expositors who dealt with the dating of the 2300 years were almost equally divided between 453 1847 and 457 B.C.—A.D. 1843 or 1844, though some ended the period in 1867 or 1868, and a few elsewhere. They were similarly divided on the little (or exceeding great) horn of Dan. 8; some interpreted it as Rome, pagan and papal, but the majority as Mohammedanism (even among those who made the papacy the little horn of ch. 7). The additional view of the little horn of ch. 8 as Antiochus Epiphanes was also often set forth.

The bulk of these expositors expected the 2300 years to end with some great event that would introduce or pave the way for the millennium. They looked for a marked increase of righteousness and upeace, or the cleansing of the church-sanctuary from

apostasy and corruption, or the destruction of Antichrist, or the freeing of the Holy Land from the Moslems. Some premillennialists expected Christ's reign on earth with His saints; postmillennialists foresaw a marked effusion of the Spirit and gradual world conversion, preceding Christ's appearing.

Millerite Exposition of Daniel 8.—The outstanding message of the Millerites was that the second coming of Christ would take place at the end of the 2300 days. In fact, the most vital differences between the Millerite expositors and others of the same period were not primarily over the calculation of the prophetic time periods, but over the events to take place at their expiration. The Millerites expected a cataclysmic end of the age, brought about by the personal return of Christ, with the attendant end of human probation, the resurrection of the righteous dead, and the slaying of the wicked.

Among the Millerites there was no diversity in specifying Rome as the "exceeding great" horn on the Grecian goat. Hence, they did not simply look for the cleansing of Palestine, Jerusalem, or the Temple from the curse of Mohammedan pollution. And as all were premillennialists, none anticipated a millennium of gradual world betterment, with universal peace and righteousness by human achievement. Unlike the Futurists, they did not see the exceeding great horn as a future, individual Antichrist; and they vigorously combatted the identification of this horn with Antiochus.

A second separating issue was the Millerite dissent from the doctrine of a restoration of literal Israel as God's people. They believed that the true Israel consisted of the followers of Christ, who became heirs of the promises to Abraham and Israel of old (Gal. 3:29). But the non-Millerite premillennialists in both the New World and the Old, who looked for the full and literal restoration of the Jews, connected the cleansing of the sanctuary with the rescue of Palestine and Jerusalem from the Moslems, whom they saw as the "exceeding great" horn of Dan. 8. Seventh-day Adventists continued to stress these points of separation, as well as to emphasize the major features upon which practically all had stood through the centuries, with the advance interpretation that the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary was to begin, not end, at the close of the 2300 days.

V. Five Centuries of Exposition of the "Daily"

Views in Pre-Reformation Days.—Interest in the meaning of the "daily" (Dan. 8:11–14), or "continual," began during pre-Reformation days and continued on through Reformation times. This interest developed when the papacy was clearly identified as the prophesied "falling away," or mystery of iniquity, and great perverter of the fundamental verities and provisions of salvation—particularly the atoning sacrifice and heavenly priesthood of Christ and the true worship of God. In the 14th century John Wyclif defined the papacy as the "abomination" that had defiled the sanctuary, or church, and expressly declared that the papal doctrine of transubstantiation and its attendant "heresy about the host" had taken away the "continual." With this position Walter Brute, contemporary Lollard scholar, definitely agreed, tying it in with the 1260 and the 1290 year-days.

Defined by Protestant Reformers.—Nicolaus von Amsdorf, first Protestant bishop of Naumburg, close associate of Luther, similarly asserted the "daily" to be the "undefiled preaching of the gospel," which had been nullified and supplanted by the desolating human traditions of the papal apostasy. At the same time Johann Funck, of Nürnberg (first free city to adopt the Reformation views), who in 1564 dated the 70 weeks from 457 B.C. to A.D. 34, likewise expounded the "daily" as the "true Worship" of God.

In the 17th century Anglican bishop George Downham, of England, continued to stress that the pope had taken away the “daily,” which he defined as the “true Doctrine and Worship of God according to his Word.” This desolation, he said, would continue till the close of the 2300 evening-mornings. With this Thomas Beverley, who placed the 2300 years between Persia and the second advent, was in accord, insisting that the papacy had taken away the “*daily Worship of the Saints*.” He also noted the relationship between the 1290–, 1335–, and 2300–year periods.

Among parallel expositors in America, the first two systematic Colonial commentators on Daniel, Ephraim Huit and Thomas Parker, in 1644 and 1646, expounded the “daily” respectively as “the daily worship of God,” and “the daily sacrifice, or true Worship” removed by the papacy.

Counterpart in Counter Reformation.—In the Counter Reformation, after the Council of Trent, both Cardinal Bellarmine (1542–1621) and Blasius Viegas (1554–1599), Portuguese Jesuit, gave as their counterinterpretation the view that the abolishing, or taking away, of the “daily” was, instead, the Protestant abrogation of the mass. Cardinal Bellarmine added that an individual Jewish Antichrist, yet to come, would further abolish the daily, or continual, sacrifice of the mass.

Thus Reformation and Counter Reformation spokesmen alike, in charges and countercharges, connected the “daily” with the true and false sacrifice and priesthood of Christ and the true worship of God. The contention of the one was the antithesis of the other, but both identified the “daily” as the worship of God.

Views Persist in 18th Century.—In post-Reformation times Dr. Sayer Rudd, Baptist of Britain (d. 1757), explicitly stated that by the “daily sacrifice” he understood—“the pure worship of God under the gospel; and by its being *taken away*, the suppression or corruption of that worship, by the antichristian tyranny taking place on the rise of the papal apostacy” (*An Essay Towards a New Explication of the Doctrines of the Resurrection, Millennium, and Judgment*, p. 14).

In the Methodist movement Jean G. de la Fléchère, Wesley’s close associate, asserted that, in taking away the “daily,” the bishop of Rome had “abolished or quite disfigured the true worship of God and Jesus, and cut down the truth to the ground.” And many of these expositors looked for this prophesied perversion to be rectified when the sanctuary would be cleansed at the end of the 2300 year-days. In an anonymous work in 1787, “R. M.” connects the “daily” with the sanctuary service in these words:

“The taking away of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of abomination, is the taking away of the true christian worship, as instituted by Christ and his Apostles, and the setting up of the doctrines and commandments of men. . . . The daily sacrifice is a Mosaic term for the true worship of God suited to the time in which Daniel lived”

(*Observations on Certain Prophecies in the Book of Daniel*, pp. 8, 9).

Hans Wood, of Ireland, one of the earliest to declare the 70 weeks to be the first part of the 2300 days, in 1787 defined the taking away of the “daily” as the substituted innovations in “divine worship” introduced by the papal little horn, and resulting in the “profanation of the temple,” or church. This he dated from the outset of the 1290 years. And during the French Revolution, George Bell, writing on the “Downfall of Antichrist” and the treading underfoot of the Holy City by the papacy, said that “the Gentiles, or Papists, . . . take away the daily sacrifice, and set up the abomination that maketh the visible church of Christ desolate for the space of 1260 years.” He refers to the 1290 years as 30 years longer.

Views in 19th-Century Advent Awakening.—In the 19th-century Old World advent awakening, William Cuninghame of Scotland, writing in 1808, observed that Mohammedanism had neither taken away the “daily” nor cast down the place of Christ’s sanctuary, and declared, “the *church of Christ* is the temple, or *sanctuary*; and the *worship of this church, the daily sacrifice*.” Commenting on 2 Thess. 2, he added: “Of this temple, the daily sacrifice is taken away when this form of sound words no longer remains, and when the worship of God, through Christ alone, is corrupted and obscured, by superstitious veneration for the Virgin Mary and the saints, or by any species of creature worship. It then ceases to be the daily sacrifice ordained of God” (*The Christian Observer*, April, 1808, p. 211).

He held that the “*daily sacrifice*” of the “eastern church” was taken away nearly a century before the appearance of Mohammed, that is, in the 6th century, and the abomination of desolation was established through acts of the Roman emperors in establishing the spiritual authority of the papal little horn and the idolatrous veneration of the virgin Mary and the saints.

But George Stanley Faber, learned Anglican prebendary of Salisbury Cathedral, held that Mohammedanism had also taken away the “daily sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,” and thus “polluted the spiritual sanctuary,” magnifying itself against Christ. And Capt. Charles D. Maitland, of the Royal Artillery, wrote in 1814: “The daily sacrifice of spiritual worship was taken out of the Gentile church, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up therein, in the year of our Lord 533. From this period the saints were given into the hands of the Papal power, and permission was granted to that power to exercise dominion and tyrannize over them 1260 years” (*A Brief and Connected View of Prophecy*, p. 27).

Archibald Mason, of Scotland, well-known Presbyterian minister, who in 1820 fixed upon 457 B.C. and A.D. 1843 as the beginning and ending dates of the 2300 years, declared that the daily sacrifice signifies “the instituted worship of God in the church,” and “the desolation and treading down of the sanctuary and the host, means the error, superstition and idolatry, that were established instead of that worship” (*Two Essays on Daniel’s ... Two Thousand Three Hundred Days*, p. 6). This, he adds, will end with the expiration of the 2300 years, when the “true worship of God shall be restored.”

Then John Bayford, cosponsor of Joseph Wolff, wrote: “The daily sacrifice which he [the trampling power] hath taken away, is doubtless the Lamb of God, the blood of which, the Mahometan tramples underfoot.” Scholarly Frederick Nolan, noted linguist, linked the “daily service” to the “peculiar solemnity” of the services on the “*great day of Atonement*,” performed by the “high priest, in the holiest place of the Temple.” Edward Bickersteth, evangelical rector and secretary of the Church Missionary Society, referring to the 70 weeks as cut off for the Jews from the 2300 days, said they led “from the restoration of the daily sacrifice to the completing of the perfect sacrifice of Christ,” and the anointing of the “most Holy.”

Reverse Application Under Manning.—During the 19-century advent awakening another Roman Catholic cardinal, Henry Edward Manning, when asked the question, “What is the taking away of the continual sacrifice of Dan. 8:11–14?” replied that it is the taking away of “the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist, ... the sacrifice of Jesus Himself on Calvary, renewed perpetually and continued for ever in the [Catholic] sacrifice on the altar.” He then charged Protestantism with having taken away the sacrifice of the mass in the West, and called this the forerunner of a futurist Jewish Antichrist, who, just before world’s end, will cause the daily sacrifice of the mass to “cease” altogether for a little

time. He chided the various Protestant lands for “suppression” of the “continual sacrifice,” that is, the “rejection of the Mass,” castigating such suppression as the “mark and characteristic of the Protestant Reformation” (*The Temporal Power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ*, pp. 158–161).

Thus, irrespective of opposing views, the issue of the “daily” ever revolved around the sacrifice of Christ and the priesthood and the proper, or true, worship of God.

There was no particular variation from the historic Protestant view among 19th-century North American pre- or non-Millerite expositors. Robert Reid, Reformed Presbyterian minister, in 1828 continued to charge that the papal apostasy had “horribly polluted” the “sanctuary of God,” and that Antichrist had thus taken away the “daily” (*The Seven Last Plagues*, pp. 4–9, 67–72).

Miller Takes Different View.—William Miller, founding father of the Millerite movement, introduced a completely different view. Combining the expression “the daily” in Dan. 8:11–14; 11:31; 12:11 with Matt. 24:15 and 2 Thess. 2:7, 8, he declared that the hindering power of pagan Rome must be taken out of the way before the papal mystery of iniquity would be revealed. Hence he concluded that the “daily” must be paganism, removed before the papacy could develop.

A vital factor in this view was his interpretation of the ten-horned beast of Rev. 13 as pagan Rome, with one of its pagan heads wounded to death and replaced by the civil power of the papacy—this last head exercising its power 42 months, or 1260 years. He made the two-horned beast (his “image beast”) the papal ecclesiastical power, but applied the number 666 to the first beast as the years of pagan Rome’s dominance. This period Miller dated from the humiliating “league” (Dan. 11:23) of the Jews with the Romans, which he mistakenly thought occurred in 158 B.C., which period would extend to the “downfall” of paganism. This he obtained by simply subtracting 158 (B.C.) from 666, which gave A.D. 508. This Miller believed to be the date of the conversion of the last of the pagan kings. And this act, he reasoned, was what took away the “daily” of paganism (Miller, *Evidence From Scripture and History*, 1836, pp. 36, 50, 56–62, 71).

This concept, differing radically from the historic Reformation view, was held by nearly all the Millerites. But by 1842 some of them came to dissent from some of Miller’s positions. Evidence for the event that he dated A.D. 508 was questioned by his colleague Charles Fitch as early as 1838, in his first letter to Miller (S. Bliss, *Memoirs of William Miller*, p. 129).

Six months prior to the October, 1844, disappointment, Miller publicly stated that his brethren had not generally agreed with him that the 666 meant 666 years of pagan Rome (*Midnight Cry*, Feb. 22, 1844, p. 242). The chart adopted by the Millerite General Conference of May, 1842, omits the number 666 as the years of paganism, and “the daily” as paganism.

Crosier and the Reformation View.—In 1846 appeared O. R. L. Crosier’s article embodying the results of his joint study with Hiram Edson and F. F. Hahn. Though not defining the “daily,” it is built on the premise that the sanctuary to be cleansed (Dan. 8:11–14) was the heavenly sanctuary, involving Christ’s two-fold ministry based on His one and all-sufficient sacrifice:

“What was this that Rome and the apostles of christianity should jointly pollute? This combination was formed against the ‘holy covenant’ and it was the Sanctuary of that covenant they polluted; which they could do as well as to pollute the name of God; Jer. 34:16; Ezek. 20; Ma[th]. 1:7. This was the same as profaning or blaspheming his name.

“In this sense this ‘politico-religious’ beast polluted the Sanctuary (Rev. 13:6.) and cast it down from its place in heaven, (Ps. 102:19; Jer. 17:12; Heb. 8:1, 2) when they called Rome the holy city (Rev. 21:2) and enstalled the Pope there with the titles, ‘Lord God the Pope,’ ‘Holy Father,’ ‘Head of the Church’ &c., and there, in the counterfeit ‘temple of God’ he professes to do what Jesus actually does in his Sanctuary; 2 Thes. 2:1–8. The Sanctuary has been trodden underfoot (Dan. 8:13,) the same as the Son of God has; Heb. 10:29”

(Crosier, *The Day-Star* Extra, Feb. 7, 1846, p. 38).

Later, moving toward the Reformation view, Crosier defined the “daily” as a doctrine—“that Christ ‘was crucified for us’”—which was taken away “*from him* [Christ] and replaced by the Papacy “with its human merit, intercessions and institutions in place of Christ’s” (*Day-Dawn*, March 19, 1847, p. 2).

White on Crosier’s View.—James White accepted Crosier’s 1846 view of the sanctuary trodden underfoot, but not his 1847 identification of the “daily.”

“We say, then, that the Sanctuary in heaven has been trodden under foot in the same sense that the Son of God has been trodden under foot. In a similar manner has the ‘host,’ the true church, also, been trodden down. Those who have rejected the Son of God have trodden him under foot, and of course have trodden under foot his Sanctuary. ...

“The Pope has professed to have ‘power on earth to forgive sins,’ which power belongs alone to Christ. The people have been taught to look to ‘the man of sin,’ seated in his temple, or as Paul says—‘so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,’ &c.—instead of looking to Jesus, seated at the right hand of the Father, in the heavenly Sanctuary. In thus turning away from Jesus, who alone could forgive sins, and give eternal life, and in bestowing on the Pope such titles as MOST HOLY LORD, they have ‘trodden under foot the Son of God.’ And in calling Rome the ‘Eternal City,’ and the ‘Holy City,’ they have trodden down the City of the living God, and the heavenly Sanctuary. The ‘host,’ the true church that have looked to Jesus in the true Sanctuary for pardon of sins, and eternal life, has, as well as their Divine Lord and his Sanctuary, been trodden under foot”

(*The Review and Herald*, Jan., 1851, pp. 28, 29).

White and other Seventy-day Adventist pioneers adopted Crosier’s view that the sanctuary *trodden under foot* (Dan. 8:13) was the one in heaven, yet held Miller’s view that the sanctuary *cast down* (Dan. 8:11) was a pagan sanctuary and that the “daily” was paganism (Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens*, 1846, pp. 30–32; J.N. Andrews, in *The Review and Herald*, Jan. 6, 1853, p. 129; Uriah Smith, *ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1864, pp. 180, 181; James White, *ibid.*, Feb. 15, 1870, pp. 57, 58, in a series “*Our Faith and Hope*,” which was reprinted as *Sermons on the Coming ... of ... Christ*).

Smith Restates Miller’s View.—Uriah Smith’s statement of the prevailing view appears thus in the first edition (1873) of his book on Daniel (page 94):

“The little horn [of Daniel 8] symbolized Rome in its entire history, including the two phases of pagan and papal. These two phases are elsewhere spoken of as the ‘daily’ (sacrifice is a supplied word) and the ‘transgression of desolation;’ the daily (desolation) signifying the pagan form, and the transgression of desolation, the papal. In the actions ascribed to this power, sometimes one form is spoken of, sometimes the other. ‘By him,’ the papal form, ‘the daily,’ the pagan form, ‘was taken away.’ Pagan Rome gave place to papal Rome. And the place of his sanctuary, or worship, the city of Rome, was cast down. The seat of government was removed to Constantinople. The same transaction is brought to view in Revelation 13:2, where it says that the dragon, pagan Rome, gave to the beast, papal Rome, his seat, the city of Rome, and power and great authority, the whole influence of the empire.”

The “New View.”—About the end of the century dissatisfaction with Smith’s exposition resulted in the rise of the view that the “daily” meant Christ’s priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, “taken away” by the substitution of an earthly priesthood and sacrifice. This “new view” was advocated by L. R. Conradi in Europe and by A. G. Daniells, W. W. Prescott, W. C. White, and others in America. Thus developed the two Seventh-day Adventist views of the “daily.”

VI. Progressive Accuracy in Dating of 70 Weeks

Early Christian Writers Compute.—Irenaeus alluded to “the sacrifice and the libation” taken away by Antichrist during the “half-week.” Tertullian (d. about 240) stated that the 70 weeks were fulfilled by Christ’s incarnation and death. However, he started this prophetic period with the first year of Darius, curiously continuing it to Jerusalem’s destruction under Titus. He declared the period was sealed by the first advent of Christ at the end of 621½ weeks.

Clement of Alexandria (d. about 220) likewise held that the 70 weeks included Christ’s advent, with the Temple built in the prophesied “seven weeks.” Judea was quiet during the “sixty and two weeks,” and “Christ our Lord, ‘the Holy of Holies,’ having come and fulfilled the vision of the prophecy, was anointed in His flesh by the Holy Spirit of His Father.” Christ was Lord during the sixty-two weeks and the one week, said Clement. During the first half of the week Nero held sway, and during the other half he was taken away, and Jerusalem was destroyed at the end of the period.

Hippolytus made the 70 prophetic weeks to be weeks of literal years, with the “434 years” (62 weeks) reaching from Zerubbabel and Ezra to the first advent of Christ. But he separated the 70th week from the preceding 69 by inserting a chronological gap, placing the last week of years at the end of the world, and dividing it into two segments. This view seems to have had little following in the early church.

Next, Julius Africanus counted the 70 weeks from Artaxerxes I to the cross. He said: “It is by calculating from Artaxerxes, therefore, up to the time of Christ that the seventy weeks are made up, according to the numeration of the Jews.”

However, he reckoned 490 lunar years (which he equated with 475 solar years) from the 20th year of Artaxerxes (444 B.C.) to A.D. 31. Then Origen, of Alexandria, gross perverter of Bible interpretation, strangely computed the 70 weeks by decades, thus totaling 4900 years, which he declared extended from Adam to the rejection of the Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. After the close of the martyr period, Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, clearly presented the 490 years as from Persia to Christ, and added: “It is quite clear that seven times seventy weeks reckoned in years amounts to 490. That was therefore the period determined for Daniel’s people.”

Spreading the 70 weeks from Cyrus to the time of Christ, Eusebius separated the component parts and introduced a gap, but he placed the crucifixion in the midst of the 70th week in these words:

“One week of years therefore would be represented by the whole period of His association with the Apostles, both the time before His Passion, and the time after His Resurrection. For it is written that before His Passion He shewed Himself for the space of three-and-a-half years to His disciples and also to those who were not His disciples: while by teaching and miracles He revealed the powers of His Godhead to all equally whether Greeks or Jews. But after His Resurrection He was most likely with His disciples a period equal to the years. . . . So that this would be the prophet’s week of years, during which He ‘confirmed a covenant with many,’ confirming that is to say the new Covenant of the Gospel Preaching.”

Medieval Expositors Continue the Differences.—There is little change or discussion in the early medieval period. Augustine reckoned the 490 years to the cross, stating that the date of the Passion is shown by Daniel. The anonymous work *Sargis d’Aberga* similarly extended the 69 weeks to Christ. The Venerable Bede followed the position early taken by Africanus, who dated the 70 weeks from the 20th year of Artaxerxes to Christ, with His baptism in the midst of the 70th week. Medieval Jews, like Saadia, understood the period as 490 years. Pseudo Aquinas held that the 70 weeks were

490 lunar years, from the 20th year of Artaxerxes, with Christ's baptism in the midst of the 70th week, but with the cross near the close of the period. Arnold of Villanova, 13th-century physician, placed Christ's death after the 62 weeks. That clearly was not the terminal point, for he placed the "midst of the week" in the 4th year after Jerusalem's fall, the 46th year after the crucifixion.

Reformation Leaders Vary in Dating Cross.—In Protestant Reformation times Luther and Melancthon called attention to the universal acceptance of the 70 weeks as "weeks of years," the former dating them from the 2d year of Darius, but placing Christ's death at the beginning of the 70th week. In this he was followed by some. Melancthon, however, dated them from the 2d year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, with 69 weeks to the baptism of Christ, with the crucifixion in the midst of the 70th week 31½ years after Christ's baptism.

Johann Funck (d. 1566), court chaplain of Nürnberg, wrote the most thorough and complete treatise on the 70 weeks up to his day, and was probably the first in Reformation times to begin the 70 weeks in 457 B.C. and end them in A.D. 34. This was epochal. He regarded them as 490 solar years from the 7th year of Artaxerxes, and this he tabulated as well as expounded. Georg Nigrinus (d. 1602), Evangelical theologian, placed the period from 456 B.C. to A.D. 34, also with the cross at the close.

Heinrich Bullinger, of Zurich (1504–1575), likewise dated the 70 weeks from the 7th year Artaxerxes, or about 457 B.C. to about A.D. 33, with the crucifixion at the end. Jacques Cappel (157–1624), French theologian, similarly began the 490 years in 457 B.C., the "seventh year of Artaxerxes." Joseph Mede in 1638, pivoting the 70 weeks on the destruction of Jerusalem, reckoned them 421 B.C. to A.D. 70, but put the cross in A.D. 33. On the contrary, John Tillinghast counted 486 years to the cross in A.D. 34.

There is little change of emphasis and little discussion in this post-Reformation period—Cocceius ended the 70 weeks in 33. William Whiston (followed by Bishop William Lloyd) curiously computed the period by 360-day years (which he supposed were used by the Persians), thus reckoning the 490 years from 445 B.C. to some time after A.D. 33. Sir Isaac Newton terminated them in A.D. 34. Heinrich Horch, the Berleburg Bible, Johann Bengel, and Johann Petri all placed the cross in the midst of the 70th week, Petri dating the period from 453 B.C. to A.D. 37. Hans Wood (followed by William Hales) extended them from 420 B.C. to A.D. 70. Christian Thube of Germany placed the cross at the beginning of the last week, in A.D. 30, thus ending the 70 weeks in A.D. 37. Such was the wide variation.

American Expositors' Views.—Among Colonial American interpreters the first systematic expositor, Ephraim Huit, in 1644 dated the 70 weeks from Artaxerxes, with the cross at the close of the first half of the 70th week. John Davenport (1597–1670), Puritan pastor of Boston, likened the divisions of Daniel's 70 weeks to consecutive links in a chain. Samuel Langdon (1723–1797), president of Harvard, used the 70 weeks as proof of the soundness of the year-day principle for all the prophetic time periods. Samuel Osgood dated the period from the 7th year of Artaxerxes to the cross.

457 B.C. to A.D. 33 Is Predominant Dating.—In the Old World advent awakening of the early decades of the 19th century a score of expositors fixed upon the year 457 B.C., the 7th year of Artaxerxes, as the beginning of the 70 weeks, most often ending them in A.D. 33 (some in 34). William Hales (1747–1831), the chronologist later cited by the Millerites, dated the "one week" (not the 70th week) from A.D. 27 to 34, with the

cross in the “midst” of this 70th week, in A.D. 31. Writing in 1820, Archibald Mason of Scotland fixed upon 457 B.C. and A.D. 33, while J. A. Brown took 457 B.C. to A.D. 34. Both expositors understood the 70 weeks to be the first part of the 2300 years, thus ending the longer period in 1843 and 1844 respectively.

On the other hand a few expositors, such as Bishop Daniel Wilson of India, writing in 1836, chose 453 B.C. to A.D. 37, with the cross in the midst of the week. But architect Matthew Habershon, Edward Bickersteth, and Louis Gaussen of Geneva all placed the 70-week segment from 457 B.C. to A.D. 33 or 34.

Here is Hales’ comment on the A.D. 31 cross:

“And after the *sixty and two weeks*, before specified, as the largest division of the 70, was the ANOINTED [LEADER] *cut off* judicially, by an iniquitous sentence, *in the midst of the one week*, which formed the third and last division, and began with our Lord’s Baptism, about A.D. 27.—‘when he was beginning to be *thirty* years of age,’ and commenced his mission, which lasted *three years and half* until his crucifixion, about A.D. 31.

“27. During this *one week*, which ended about A.D. 34 (about the martyrdom of *Stephen*,) a *new covenant* was established with many of the Jews, of every class; in the midst of which the Temple sacrifice was virtually abrogated by the *all-sufficient* sacrifice of the *Lamb of God that taketh away the sins* of the [repentant and believing] world.”

Dr. Mason defends his choice of the 7th year of Artaxerxes as the beginning of the 70 weeks, rather than the decrees of Cyrus or Darius, in these words:

“The decree of the Persian king, mentioned in this prophecy, must be the decree of Artaxerxes given to Ezra, in the seventh year of that monarch’s reign. The decrees of Cyrus and Darius were too early, and the decree of Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, given to Nehemiah, was too late, for answering the prediction.—Artaxerxes issued his decree to Ezra, in the 457th year before Christ. If we add to this number 33 years, which was our Redeemer’s age at his crucifixion, we have 490 years”

(*Two Essays on Daniel’s Prophetic Number of Two Thousand Three Hundred Days*, p. 16).

The selection of 453 B.C. by William Pym and a few others was based on the supposition that the 70th week began in A.D. 30, “when Christ was thirty years old.” Here is Pym’s formula:

“The covenant therefore is the Gospel covenant, and the last week of the seventy are those seven years which began when Christ was thirty years old, and finished A.D. 37, at the conversion of Cornelius. Sixty-nine weeks, or 483 years, have therefore to be reckoned back from the 30th year of Christ for the commencement of the seventy weeks, which deducting 30 from 483, makes before Christ 453; or, which is the same thing, 490 years, i.e. 70 weeks from A.D. 37”

(*A Word of Warning in the Last Days*, p. 26).

And the relation of the 70 weeks to the 2300 year-days is expressed by Bickersteth in this way:

“Of the whole period of 2300 years, 70 weeks of years were determined or cut off, from the restoration of the daily sacrifice to the completing of the perfect sacrifice of Christ, when the spiritual temple was raised up (John ii, 19–21), and the most Holy was anointed. *Heb.* i.9, ix.24. We have here then the ecclesiastical period of 70 weeks or 490 years distinct and perfect”

(*A Practical Guide to the Prophecies* [5th ed., 1836], p. 191).

American Writers Vary on 70 Weeks.—At least 14 pre- or non-Millerite expositors, between 1800 and 1844, placed the beginning and closing dates of the 490 years as 457 B.C. and A.D. 33 (with the cross in the end of the 70th week), or 453 B.C. to A.D. 37 (with the cross of the midst of the 70th week). So the dating of the cross was the crux of the problem, and the determining factor in timing the 70 weeks.

William Miller placed the cross, then generally dated as A.D. 33, at the end of the 70th week. His early associates at first also took this for granted, as most non-Millerite authorities had done in both the Old World and the New. But several scholarly Millerite writers came to see the inconsistency and inaccuracy of this position. They decided from

a study of William Hales and various writers on the Jewish calendar that the crucifixion took place in the spring of A.D. 31, in the “midst” of the 70th week; thus that the 70th week extended from the autumn of 27 to the autumn of 34. This was a factor in moving the closing date of the 2300 years from “1843” to 1844. Further, from their study of the symbolism of the Jewish festivals, the Millerites concluded that the 2300 years ended in the 7th Jewish month, that is, in the autumn.

This adjustment, from “1843” to 1844, as the terminus of the 2300 years, was brought about by realizing (1) that 2300 complete years must extend from 457 B.C. to 1844; (2) consequently that the 70 weeks (490 years) must end in A.D. 34; (3) that the cross must be located in the “midst” of the 70th week (A.D. 27–34), that is, in A.D. 31. Now if the “midst” of the 70th week was the spring of A.D. 31, the end of the 70th week was the autumn of A.D. 34. Therefore the 1810 remaining years, beyond the close of the 490 years, which end in the autumn of A.D. 34, would of necessity lead to the autumn of 1844.

Criticism Over Time Setting Invalid.—While there has been widespread taunting criticism over the stark failure of the Millerites’ expectancy of the second advent of Christ in 1844, and withering censure for the impertinence of such time setting, that is not the whole picture. Their mistake was neither greater, nor more to be censured, than the time setting of many prominent clerics of various leading churches who, in both the Old World and the New, profoundly believed that the year 1843, 1844, or 1847 would mark the beginning of an earthly millennium, or some important event leading to it, such as the fall of the pope or the Turk, the return of the Jews, or the cleansing of the church.

Many set approximately the same date as the Millerites for some transcendent event to take place, and they did so on the basis of the same inspired prophecy of Dan. 8:14—the 2300 years-days to the cleansing of the sanctuary, as certified by the events of the 70 weeks. Yet all were equally mistaken as to the event to take place.

Those who criticized the Millerites, but who had themselves abandoned the apostolic and age-old platform of premillennialism in espousing the 18th-century Whitbyan postmillennial fallacy—and yet sought to tie it into a really invulnerable time prophecy for validation—should not go unscathed. The historical record does not permit these time setters to criticize other time setters, or to assume a holier-than-thou attitude.

At issue was the meaning of the prophetic words “then shall the sanctuary be cleansed” (Dan. 8:14). The earlier Millerites had looked for the cleansing of the sanctuary in the cleansing of the earth by fire at the expected return of their Lord in 1843. Non-Millerite expositors, on the contrary, had usually regarded the sanctuary either as the church, destined to be cleansed from the pollutions of apostasy, false doctrine, and departure from God, or as the Holy Land, to be freed from the Mohammedans, to allow the restoration of the Jews. This cleansing, many of them thought, would begin about 1843, 1844, or 1847, and spread triumphantly over the millennial period. A radiant picture of the future was painted.

The dream of the time-setting postmillennialists, their fond expectancy of the conversion and the peaceful transformation of all mankind, was not realized, and similar hopes since have been shattered by the unspeakable horrors of two world wars and the paralyzing fears of a third. Similarly, those who expected Christ to come at the beginning of the millennium and set up an earthly kingdom were disappointed. The utter failure of these non-Millerite time settings should silence criticism of a Scripture-believing group

who found their way out of partial truth into the fuller light concerning the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Both Millerites and non-Millerites were mistaken as to the actual event to take place. And only as added light dawned on the final phase of Christ's high priestly ministry in the antitypical Day of Atonement, could the true significance of the 1844 movement be understood as heralding the judgment. The Millerite expectation was faulty as to the nature of the event anticipated. But something transcendent indeed did take place in the autumn of 1844.

In the final, or "seventh month," 1844 phase of the Millerite movement, a new concept of the cleansing of the sanctuary had dawned upon the Millerites. Closer study of the Mosaic types of the earthly sanctuary service showed them to be the shadow of the heavenly realities (Heb. 8; 9). This was a long step forward. In this 1844 phase of the movement the Millerites saw Jesus Christ as our heavenly High Priest, ministering in the heavenly holy of holies—or the heaven of heavens, as they began to conceive of it—who would, they believed, emerge from heaven at the close of this atonement service on the tenth day of the seventh month, to bless His waiting people. And this would involve and constitute His second advent, for "unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28).

This "seventh month" concept was an essential transition step to the fuller truth that dawned immediately following the great disappointment of October 22—that instead of Jesus Christ *coming out of heaven* on that day, to bless His waiting people through His second advent, He for the first time *entered into the second phase of His ministry* as High Priest, represented by the service in the most holy place, and that He had the judgment-hour work to perform before coming to this earth at His second advent.

VII. Closing Section of Daniel 11; Periods of Chapter 12

Regarded for Centuries as Literal Days.—Pre-Christian exposition of Dan. 11 began with the understanding that this prophecy repeats in literal detail the course of the same three powers portrayed in Dan. 8—Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Possibly the first reference to Rome in prophetic interpretation appears in a late (9th century A.D.) copy of what is accepted as representing the original Septuagint translation of Daniel, dating perhaps from the 2d century B.C. Here "Chittim" ch. 11:36 was boldly rendered "the Romans."

Apparently the first Christian writer to attempt to identify a specific feature of this chapter was Hippolytus, who states that the "shameless king" of Dan. 11:36 is Antichrist, a malign person who is to rebuild Jerusalem, restore the sanctuary, and accept worship as Christ. To Hippolytus the related 1290 and 1335 days of Dan. 12 were merely days—the 1290 days being the time of Antichrist's war on the saints, with the kingdom of heaven coming to those who survive the 45 days beyond the 1290, that is, to the end of the 1335 days. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315–386) mentions that some have applied the 1290 and the 1335 days to the period of Antichrist. And Jerome (c. 340–420) wrote: "But our [people] think that all these things are prophesied of Antichrist who will be in the last time."

Theodoret (c. 386–457), Greek theologian of Antioch, equated the 31/2 times, or years, with the 1290 days. And Haymo of Halberstadt (bishop 840–853) held that after the 1260 days and the death of Antichrist, 45 days—the difference between the 1290 and 1335 days—are given to the elect to repent, and are days of grace. The Venerable Bede (c. 673–735), English historian, believed that the second advent would follow the 1335

days—45 days beyond the 1290—when Christ would come in majesty, after the destruction of Antichrist. And his 3 1/2 times are literal years.

Year-Day Principle Applied in 13th Century.—In 1297 Arnold of Villanova declared that Antichrist would come about the end of 1290 years “from the time when the Jewish people lost possession of their land” (after the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans). He was apparently the first Christian writer (unless it was Olivi) to specifically apply the year-day principle to these longer periods, and ended the 1290 years in either 1376 or 1378, and the 1335 years in the 15th century, in the era of universal tranquility of the church.

French-born leader of the Spirituals, Pierre Jean d’Olivi (1248–1298), likewise applied the year-day principle to the 1290 and 1335 days. He thought the 1260- and 1290-day periods to be the same (simply calculated in different ways)—with the 1290 years extending from Christ’s death to Antichrist, and the 1335 years reaching 45 years beyond to the Jubilee of peace, and the seventh estate of grace.

Jewish Attempts to Locate the Periods.—Numerous Jewish expositors—from 9th-century Karaite Benjamin ben Moses Nahawendi, of Persia, on to 16th-century Naphtali Herz ben Jacob Elhanan, of Germany—applied the year-day principle to the 1290- and/or 1335-day prophetic time periods of Daniel. At least seven so expounded before Catholic Joachim of Floris applied the year-day formula to the 1260 days, and before his followers in the 13th century extended it to include Daniel’s other time prophecies Nahawendi dated the 1290 years from the destruction of the second Temple to 1358.

A succession of Jewish scholars, from Saadia ben Joseph (882–942) of Babylonia onward, declared these time periods to be years. Some did not date them; others dated them from the 1st century, perhaps with the destruction of Jerusalem, to the time of the Messianic era, possibly ending about 1358 and 1403; and still others terminated the 1290 around 1462, the 1335 in 1575 or 1594. These expositors were spread over France, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Algiers, and Turkey.

Statesman Isaac Abravanel expected the end of the 1335 years about 1503, and held the nations of Dan. 2, 7, and 8 to be the subject of Dan. 11 as well. He thought possibly the kings of the north and south involve the Christians and the Turks, and dated the 1290 (1390) years to the 1453 conquest of Constantinople.

Diverse Pre-Reformation and Reformation Views.—In medieval times John Milicz (d. 1374), precursor of the Bohemian Reformation, combining Dan. 12:12 with Matt. 24:15, counted the 1335 years from the crucifixion to the Antichrist in about 1363–1367. Scholarly Nicholas de Lyra (d. 1340) likewise believed Daniel’s 1290 and 1335 days to be years. And John Wyclif (c. 1324–1384) interpreted Christ’s “abomination of desolation,” applied to the defiling of the sanctuary in Dan. 11, as the doctrine of transubstantiation. And his calculation of the end, made in 1356, was definitely influenced by the 1290- and 1335-year prophecies.

John Purvey (c. 1354–1428), colaborer of Wyclif and writer of the first Protestant commentary, believed that he was in the 45 years (apparently between the 1290 and the 1335 years) given to the elect for repentance. And the 14th-century Lollard scholar, Walter Brute, dated the 1290 years from Hadrian’s placing of the abomination (idol) in the holy place to the revealing of Antichrist.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) applied the willful king of Dan. 11 to the pope, declaring he would come to his end between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic seas—with none to help.

“Here, [Daniel 11:37](#), we have a description of the Antichrist. . . . The latter [Antichrist] shall reign between two seas, at Constantinople, but that place is not holy, they [the Turks] also do not forbid marriage, therefore, believe me, the Pope is the Antichrist.”

Like scores before him, Luther also held the 1290 and 1335 to be years, but ended them about 1372. On the contrary, Melancthon (1497–1560), stressing the Mohammedan and papal perversions of the true worship, said Dan. 11:45 may refer not alone to the Turk, who has his seat between the two seas, but also to the seat of the Roman pope, also located between two seas. Seeking the time placement, Funck of Nürnberg, taking A.D. 261 as the starting point of the 1290 years, ended this period of time in 1550, and extended the 1335 to 1595, 45 years beyond. Oecolampadius (1482–1531) held that Dan. 11 climaxes with Antichrist.

From Nikolaus Selnecker of Nürnberg (1530–1592) onward, numerous well-known scholars—including English Archbishop Thomas Cranmer and Bishop John Jewel—regarded the pope as the power of the latter part of Dan. 11. On the contrary, a few believed it to indicate Turkey.

Lord John Napier, of the early 17th century, first Scottish expositor of the Revelation, taking the 1290 and 1335 days to be years, believed the 1335 might be from the taking away of the Jewish ceremonies under Julian, A.D. 365, and therefore would end in 1700, at which time he looked for the judgment. On the contrary, Catholic Counter Reformation Cardinal Bellarmine as a Futurist sought to limit the 1290 days to a single malign person, and the 45-day interval between the 1290 and 1335 to literal days before Antichrist would be slain.

Terminal Dates Set Later and Later.—In the Post-Reformation era, numerous men in the Old World, between George Downham (1603) and James Bicheno (1974), left expositions of Dan. 11 attempting to locate the 1290 and 1335 days. Some simply said the longer period leads to the second advent, the resurrection, the end, the judgment, or the New Jerusalem. With others, specific dates were suggested for these, calculated on the year-day principle. Bishop Downham, of Derry, identified the papacy as the “king of the north,” destined to come to his end, with the longer period of 1335 days, or years, terminating in what he spoke of as the “glorious state of New Jerusalem.”

On the other hand, nonconformist educator Henry More (1614–1687) believed not only that the Antichrist (apparently the papacy) is indicated in Dan. 11:37, 38, but that the Turk is the final king of the north, coming to his end with none to help. So these two views were now running parallel.

The two positions were interwoven by John Tillinghast, who thought that both the papacy and the Turk are indicated in Dan. 11:40 and onward, with both to be destroyed by the coming of Christ. And he calculated the 1290 years from Julian (A.D. 366) to 1656, dating the 1335 years from the same 366 to 1701—the end of the 2300 years—with Christ’s personal reign and the millennium. But William Sherwin (1607–1687?) applied the final king of the north to the Turk, destined to come to his end without help. And he terminated the 1290 years in 1656 (reckoned from Julian the Apostate), and the 1335 and 2300 years in 1700, as the beginning of the “blessed time.” So the terminal points were gradually moved forward.

Thomas Beverley, in 1684, also saw the king of the north as the Turk, soon coming to his end as predicted. The 2300 and 1335 years he closed in 1772, as the approaching “end of all.” The anonymous writer of *The Mysteries of God Finished* (1699) thought the 1335 years would end synchronously with the 2300, perhaps in 1699, at the end of the reign of

Antichrist, with the 1260 and 1290 ending in 1685. Bible commentator William Lowth (1660–1732) had the papacy as the “Willful King” of Dan. 11, with the 1335 years leading to the cleansing of the sanctuary and terminating along with the 2300 years.

In the 18th century, exegetes in Great Britain, Switzerland, and Germany again sought to solve the mystery of the dating of these two periods. One terminated them in 1745 and 1790, respectively, another as late as 1860. Their close was tied to the last judgment, the resurrection, and the advent, or the setting up of the kingdom of God—always to the “last things.”

Reformed pastor Johann Petri, in the latter part of the 18th century, ended the 1290 years in 1847, which would begin the millennial reign, and had the 1335 end in 1892—preparatory to the eternal rest. Later, Hans Wood, of Ireland, put the Turk in Dan. 11:44, 45, with the 1290 and the 1335 terminating with the 2300 years in 1880. Dissenter James Bicheno (d. 1831) dated the 1290 and 1335 from 529, thus ending them in 1819 and 1864—the latter date the year of the “Blessed One,” with the Turk as the king of the north. But Christian G. Thube, of Germany, at the end of the century, held the papacy to be identical with the power of Dan. 11:36–45.

Early Americans Match Old World Expositions.—American writers from Roger Williams (d. 1683) to Joshua Spalding (1796) gave much the same explanation of the powers of the latter part of Dan. 11, and the time periods of ch. 12. Thus Williams, pioneer of religious liberty in America, declared the power of Dan. 11:36 to be the same as the papal little horn of Dan. 7:25. Ephraim Huit (d. 1644), first systematic Colonial expositor of Daniel, said the 11th chapter parallels the preceding prophecies of chs. 2, 7, and 8. He likewise makes the blasphemous king of ch. 11:36 to be the “Romane Antichrist,” but has the Turk as the “king of the north,” and ends the 1290 and 1335 years in 1650 and 1695—beginning both in 360, when the Jewish sacrifices were removed by Julian the Apostate.

Thomas Parker, in the middle of the 17th century, likewise applied the papal exploits to vs. 36–40, with the Turk as the king of the north, but ended the 1290 years in 1859. Samuel Hutchinson similarly saw the Turk as the last power of ch. 11, whose end would come at Christ’s glorious second advent, along with the destruction of the man of sin, but did not date the time periods. Harvard’s president, Increase Mather, likewise held the papacy to be the power of v. 36, with the “Turkish Ottomanical family” following, and began the 1290- and 1335-year periods in 440 or 450. His famous son, Cotton Mather (d. 1728), likewise began both the 1290 and the 1335 in either A.D. 440 or 450—thus terminating the latter about 1785, and leading to the last things.

On the contrary, William Burnet, governor of New York and Massachusetts, believed the papacy to be the leading power of the latter part of the chapter, and ended the 1290 years in 1745, with the 1335 years extending to 1790, when the first resurrection would occur and the kingdom of God be nigh at hand. Episcopal rector Richard Clarke (d. 1780), of South Carolina, terminated the 1335 years in 1765, when he looked for the “midnight” of the world and the fall of Babylon. Congregational theologian Samuel Hopkins (d. 1803) did not specifically date the periods, but began the 1260 in 606, and thought this prophetic period might begin along with the 1290, and lead to the recovery of the church.

So the 19th century dawned with Postmaster General Samuel Osgood stressing the Ottoman power as the central figure of Dan. 11:40 ff., which would come to its end at the

second advent, but refraining from pinpointing the 1290 or 1335 years. Harvard librarian James Winthrop began the 1260 and 1290 years together in 532, and so terminated the 1290 years in 1822 with the judgment, and the 1335 with the beginning of the millennium, synchronously with the close of the 2300 years.

Joshua Spalding, “day-star” of the returning premillennial hope, whose treatise was reprinted by the Millerites, explicitly applied Dan. 11:44, 45 to the papal Antichrist going forth with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many, then coming to his end. The 1290- and 1335-year periods of Dan. 12 were taken as leading to the first resurrection and the New Jerusalem, with the deliverance of the church, the harvest, and the judgement at hand. This was the immediate background of the Millerite exposition.

Old World Exposition in 19th-Century Awakening.—Expositors in the 19th-century Old World advent awakening were divided as to the powers indicated in the latter part of the chapter—the willful king, the king of the north, etc. Some interpreted one or both of these as the papacy, others as the Turks; some included revolutionary France or Napoleon. Others in the same period saw Antiochus as the willful king (the view that was later to become predominant among modern commentators). However, in the early 19th century there was greater unanimity over the dating of the 1290 and 1335 years than in any previous period—many placing the terminal date of the 1335 years in 1867 or 1868.

These expositors were men of scholarship and prominence, and pressed their viewpoints. One frequent time calculation was to begin the 1260-, 1290-, and 1335-year periods synchronously, in A.D. 533, thus ending the 1335 years in 1867. Under this scheme the end sequences were dated for 1792, 1822, and 1867 (or 1793, 1823, and 1868). Most of them believed that the ending of the 1335 years would usher in the millennium and the period of blessedness. Some looked for the cleansing of the church, others for the battle of Gog and Magog, or the great day of God, the judgment, Christ’s descent from heaven, the resurrection and the transformation of the living saints, the destruction of every earthly power opposed to Christ and His people, and the beginning of Christ’s glorious reign.

Not a few ended one or another of the time periods in 1844. But 1867 was the predominant focal point, marking the beginning of the blessed era and ushering in the hope of the world.

American Hesitancy in Dating the 1290- and 1335-Year Periods.—On the 1290 year-days of Dan. 12:11, there were relatively few non-Millerite American expositors between 1800 and 1844 who attempted a time placement. Most of them began the 1260, 1290, and 1335 years synchronously. Those who fixed upon 533 (the date of Justinian’s imperial rescript) as the common starting point, terminated the 1290 years in 1823. Some took 606 (from Phocas or the rise of Mohammed) for the joint beginning, and ended the 1290 in 1896. Others dated the 1290 years from 587 to 1877. Others had isolated dates. There was more diversity concerning these numbers than over any other prophetic numbers in Daniel.

There was similar lack of agreement with regard to the 1335-year period. The non-Millerites who attempted a calculation most often placed it from A.D. 533 to 1866 or 1868 (approximately 45 years beyond the close of the 1290 years). A few put it from 587 to 1922, and about the same number from 606 to 1941. Scattered dating characterized the remainder. Most American interpreters, however, looked upon the 1335 years as leading up to the first resurrection and the “blessed” time to follow in the millennium, not a few

understanding this to be introduced by the second advent. There was therefore a close relationship in the dating of the 1335-, 1290-, and 1260-year periods—whether started from A.D. 533, 587, or 606.

In the earlier, or “1843,” phase of the Millerite movement, all followed Miller’s lead, and dated both the 1290 and 1335 years from A.D. 508—his date for the taking away of paganism—closing the 1290 years simultaneously with the ending of the 1260 years of papal spiritual dominance, in 1798. And they extended the 1335 years to 1843, to end synchronously with the 2300 years. But in the “seventh month,” or 1844, phase of the Millerite movement, when it came to be believed that the 2300 years extended from the autumn of 457 B.C. to the *autumn of 1844*, many shifted the close of the 1335 years from 1843 to 1844, to end them simultaneously with the 2300 years.

They evidently felt justified in making this shift because they had no fixed event for the beginning date of the 1335 years, which had rather been figured back from “1843” to approximately A.D. 508. But they felt that time was short, and there was little interest in readjusting the details of such minor points.

Division in Interpreting Last Powers.—By the time of William Miller expositors were largely agreed on the application of the earlier part of Dan. 11 to the Ptolemies and Seleucids (including Antiochus Epiphanes). But they differed as to what sections of prophecy applied to Rome, and presented endless variations in the identification of the power or powers appearing in the latter part of the chapter. Miller explained the willful king of Dan. 11:36 as the papacy, and the king of the north (v. 40) as England. However, he made vs. 40–45 refer to Napoleon, who was to plant the tabernacles of his palace in Italy and later come to his end (*Evidence From Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ*, 1842 ed., pp. 97, 98, 104–107).

The older division of opinion between the papacy and the Turk in the interpretation of the latter part of Dan. 11 continued to be reflected in the views of Seventh-day Adventists. Some, like James White, saw the papal Antichrist in the willful king and also in the power that was to come to its end; others introduced France and Napoleon into their interpretation. Later, many followed Uriah Smith in identifying Turkey as the king of the north (vs. 41–45) as well as the power in the sixth trumpet and the sixth plague.

VIII. In Conclusion

From the foregoing evidence it is clear that Seventh-day Adventists are in no sense the originators of the basic interpretation of prophecy, which is one of the oldest and noblest fields of Biblical exegesis. There has been a progressive unrolling of the scroll, section by section. We stand at the end of the notable line of faithful witnesses spread over the course of 2,000 years. Hundreds of pioneering expositors have preceded us. We may humbly say that we are the recoverers and restorers of the soundest principles and applications of the most godly and learned scholars of the past in this vital area of Biblical study.

As continuators and consummators of clearly enunciated and firmly established principles of exposition of the ages, we are truly and soundly orthodox interpreters of prophecy. The outstanding expositors of the Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant faiths are our expositional ancestors. Ours is not, then, in any sense an isolated sectarian platform. It is the broadest and soundest, the most logical and best attested, of any expositional platform on prophecy in the history of the Christian church.

We have retained what others have let slip. That, in a word, expresses our relationship to God's line of prophetic witnesses through all past time. We have gathered up the gems of prophetic truth concerning Dan. 2; 7; 8; 9; 11; 12, that have been buried under the debris of churchly discard and neglect. We have simply reset these honored expositions in the framework of the "everlasting gospel"—God's message for today.

Our immediate antecedents are to be found in the worldwide revival and second advent movement of the early decades of the 19th century, first in the Old World and then in the New, where the distinctive movement was known as Millerism.

Most of our major positions on Daniel's prophecies came directly from the Millerite expositors, for this was the chief area of their study in prophetic lines. Most of our major advances, and the area of our most intensive study, have been in the complementary prophecies of the Apocalypse, pertaining to the latter days. This is particularly true of Rev. 13–18, relating to the last things, or end events, for which neither the early church nor Reformation expositors were prepared, simply because this portion was not yet applicable.

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